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REV. RALPH ERSKINE, *A. M.*

CONSISTING OF HIS

SERMONS AND POEMS.

IN TEN LARGE VOLUMES OCTAVO.

VOLUME THE SIXTH.

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Of the Late REVEREND and LEARNED

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Minister of the Gospel in DUNFERMLINE.

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To which is prefixed,

An Account of the AUTHOR'S LIFE and WRITINGS, with an ELEGIAC POEM and large CONTENTS.

Christ sent me to preach the gospel. 1 COR. i. 17.

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MDCCLXXVIII.

SERMONS,

ON

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

THE CONTENTS.

SERMON LXXXVIII.

THE promising God, a performing God, Page 13

GEN. xxviii. 15.—*For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

After an introduction, and the words viewed in their connection, divided, opened up, explained, and the sense wrapt up in a doctrine, the following general topics of discourse are handled, *viz.*

1. What is to be understood by the Bethel-visits that God may allow his people, 18
2. Some of the dark days that may follow these Bethel-interviews, mentioned, 23
3. The promise explained, *I will not leave thee*, &c. though dark days may intervene between the promise and the accomplishment, 29
4. Some grounds offered upon which they may be assured that God *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath spoken to them of*, 41
5. Several inferences deduced for the application, 45

SERMON LXXXIX.

The Combination and Conjunction of Joys; or, the joyful Approach of the Saviour, chearfully welcomed by the Church's Echo of Faith, 61

PSALM xlvii. 7.—*Lo, I come!*—
SONG ii. 8. *Behold, he cometh!*

The words being complexly viewed and explained, and the scope of them summed up in a doctrinal proposition, the following general heads of method are prosecute, *viz.*

1. What

1. What comings of Christ to his people are joyful to him and them, pointed out, 63
2. What makes his coming joyful to *him*, evinced, 67
3. Shew what makes his coming joyful to *them*, 68
4. What expressions of joy in him are imported in his, *Lo, I come!* 71
5. What expressions of joy in them are imported in their *Behold, he cometh!* 74
6. Whence is this combination and conjunction of joys, 77
7. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, in an use of information, trial, and exhortation, 80

SERMON XC,—XCIV.

The Time of Need, a Time of Love, 90

EZEK. xvi. 8. *Now, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.*

The words being viewed in their spiritual meaning, analized, explained, and a doctrinal proposition raised from them, the following topics of discourse are handled, *viz.*
1. The sinner's time of need and misery, as described in the context, spoken of, 91
2. God's time of love, as here also represented, considered, 92
3. That he shews his love at such a remarkable juncture, as makes it appear, their time of need is his time of love, evinced, 97
4. That this is matter of wonder and admiration, pointed out, 103
5. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, 105
Use 1. Of admiration, *ibid.*
2. Of examination, 106
A word of advice, 108
3. Of information, by propounding and answering several questions, 112
4. Of examination; how to know if a *time of trouble* has been a *time of love*, 126
5. Of exhortation; to two sorts of persons, 156
(1.) To these whose time was *never* a time of love, *ibid.*
(2.) To such whose time has *been* a time of love, 163

SERMON

SERMON XCV.

Senſible Preſence, Sudden Abſence; or, the Believer's moſt comfortable Interviews but of ſhort Duration. Page 175

GEN. xxxv. 13. *And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.*

Having viewed the words in their ſcope and connexion, divided, explained, and taken up their ſenſe in a doctrinal obſervation, the following heads of method are propoſed, *viz.*

1. To ſpeak a little of the communion that God's people may have with him, 178
2. Offer a few remarks concerning their miſſing and finding the Lord, 181
3. To enquire in what reſpects they may miſs him, where they enjoyed him, 184
4. Aſſign the reaſon of this diſpenſation, 188
5. Make application of the whole ſubject, 190

SERMON XCVI.

The Mounting Chriſtian; or, the Eagle-winged Believer, 203

ISA. xl. 31.—*They ſhall mount up with wings as eagles.*

After an introduction to the words, the ſcope of the prophet in the preceding verſes, the words themſelves viewed as they ſtand connected with the preceding and ſubſequent clauſes, and their ſenſe expreſſed in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general topics are handled, *viz.*

1. The wings wherewith they mount up, ſpoke of, 208
2. The things wherein they mount up, mentioned, 209
2. The ſeaſons when it is eſpecially they mount up, 213
4. The manner how they mount up, 215
5. The reaſons why they mount up, examined, 217
6. Application made of the whole ſubject, in ſeveral uſes, 219

SERMON

SERMON XCVII.

The River of Life, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, Page 232

REV. xxii. 1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

The words being viewed in their scope, their sense ascertained, explained, and summed up in a doctrine, the following general heads of method are prosecute, *viz.*

1. Some remarks offered for clearing and confirming the doctrine, 234
2. The property and quality of the water of this river observed, 236
3. The import of its being said to proceed out of the throne of God and the Lamb, 239
4. The reasons why this river is said to proceed from thence, 241
5. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, 244

SERMON XCVIII, XCIX.

The Comer's Conflict; or, the Beginner's Battle with the Devil, when essaying to come to Christ by Faith, 260

LUKE ix. 42. *And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.*——

The Author having considered the words in their connexion, divided, explained, and raised a doctrine from them, the following particulars are illustrated, *viz.*

1. The import of coming to Christ, opened, 262
2. In what respects matters may grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ, 263
3. The reasons why people come to Christ for help, and why they whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress grow, before their deliverance come, 264
4. The application of the whole subject, 265
   (1.) Satan's temptations to heart-blasphemy, cautioned against, 270
   (2.) He tempts to heart wandering, 273
   (3.) To the omission of duty, 275
   (4.) To the commission of sin, 276
   (5.) To unworthy apprehensions of God, 277
   (6.) To self-murder, 281

SERMON

SERMON C.

Dark Providences cleared in due Time. Page 287

JOHN xiii. 7.—*What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

After taking a view of the words in their ſcope and deſign, analizing and explaining them, deducing an obſervation from them, and confirming it by an induction of ſcripture inſtances, the following general heads are propoſed, *viz.*

1. To mention ſome things the Lord doth towards his church and people, that are dark and myſterious, hidden and unknown, 292
2. To ſhew in what reſpects theſe things that he is doing for them, may be hid and unknown to them, 297
3. For what reaſon the Lord takes this way of doing, ſo hid, dark, and myſterious, that what he doth they know not, 301
4. To obſerve ſome ſeaſons when it is that he makes them know what now they are in the dark about, 303
5. To deduce ſome inferences for the application of the whole, 309

SERMON CI.

The Great Trumpet of the Everlaſting Goſpel, 322

ISA. xxvii. 13. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown; and they ſhall come which were ready to periſh in the land of Aſſyria, and the outcaſts in the land of Egypt, and ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mountain at Jeruſalem.*

The words being copiouſly viewed, both as to their literal, typical, and ſpiritual meaning, accurately analized and explained, their ſpiritual ſenſe expreſſed in a doctrinal obſervation, and each branch of the doctrine confirmed and illuſtrated from expreſs texts of ſcripture, the following general topics of diſcourſe are inſiſted upon, *viz.*

1. The ſtate and condition of ſinners by nature, as outcaſts, ready to periſh, conſidered, 328
2. The duty of ſinners to come to a Saviour, the great Lord-deliverer, and glorious object of worſhip, 331

3. The means ſpoke of by which the Lord gathers theſe ſinners thus to him, *viz.* the blowing of the great goſpel-trumpet, 334
4. The efficacy of theſe means, and ſhew why it is promiſed they *ſhall come*, 343
5. The end for which they ſhall come, *viz.* their worſhipping in his holy mountain, 346
6. Inferences for the application of the whole, 349

SERMON CII.

The Sum of the Goſpel; or, God in Chriſt, p. 359

MATT. iii. 17.—*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.*

The words being viewed in their connexion, explained, and ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general topics of diſcourſe are proſecuted, *viz.*

1. To ſpeak of God's being in Chriſt, 362
2. To enquire how God is in Chriſt, 365
3. To ſhew that in Chriſt alone, he is well-pleaſed, 374
4. To make application of the whole ſubject, 376

SERMON CIII.

Preſent Duty before approaching Darkneſs, 393

JER. xiii. 16. *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs.*

The Author having conſidered the words in their connexion, divided, and explained them, and taken up their ſenſe in a doctrinal obſervation, he propoſes the following general heads of method, *viz.*

1. To ſpeak a little of this glory that is given to God, and what it is to glorify him, 396
2. To enquire how, and by what means, we are to give him glory, 397
3 What is imported in the expreſſion, *Give glory unto the Lord your God*, 403
4 To ſpeak of the motive here aſſigned, *Before he cauſe darkneſs*, 405
5. To deduce ſome inference for the application of the whole, 410

SERMON

SERMON CIV.

The Great Ruin, and the Great Relief; or, Help from Heaven to Self-deſtroyers on Earth, p. 424

Hos. xiii. 9. *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.*

The words being viewed in their ſcope and connexion, analized, explained, and a variety of obſervations taken notice of from them, the two branches of the text are copiouſly handled, *viz.*

1. That man's ruin and deſtruction is only of himſelf, and his own ſinfulneſs, 427

The improvement of this truth, in a ſuitableneſs to the deſign of the day, 439

2. That our relief and deliverance is owing only to God, and his ſovereign mercy, 455

What fruitful leſſons may be gathered for our uſe and improvement, 459

SERMON CVI.

Chambers of Safety in Times of Danger, 468

Isa xxvi. 20, 21. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain.*

After an introduction into the ſubject, an explication of the words, and a doctrinal propoſition laid down, illuſtrated, and confirmed, the following heads of method, are treated, *viz.*

1. When may the time be ſaid to be a threatening time, ſo as a ſtorm is evidently approaching, 472
2. Why the Lord will take care of his people's ſafety and ſecurity in ſuch a time, 475
3. What chambers he wants them to come into, for their ſafety, 478
4. The application of the ſubject, 481

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SERMON LXXXVIII.

The *promiſing* God, a *performing* God *.

GENESIS xxviii. 15.

For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.

AT the laſt ſacramental ſolemnity of this ſort, I ſpoke a little upon the great plea and prayer of faith upon the divine promiſe, in the words of David, 2 Sam. vii. 25.—*Lord, do as thou haſt ſaid.* We may now look upon this text that I have read, as the gracious anſwer of God to that prayer of faith, in the words of the great God himſelf to Jacob, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of;* or, *till I have done as I have ſaid.*

What God ſaid once to Joſhua, chap. i. 5—*I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee.* Even ſo, what God ſaid to Jacob here, doth equally belong to all believers in Chriſt; *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* Hath God condeſcended to ſpeak to you, and *cauſed you to hope in his word of grace*, or promiſe, at this, or any former occaſion? Here is good

* This ſermon was preached on a thankſgiving-day, immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Abbot's-hall, October 22d, 1733. It hath now undergone ſix impreſſions.

news to take away with you, that the promising God, will, in due time be a performing God, and that you may not think long, and *weary or faint in your mind*, apprehending what a weary time it may be between the promise and the performance. Here is supporting encouragement in the mean time, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* What I have said I will do, and will not leave thee till I have done it.

In the preceding part of this chapter, you find Jacob was forced to flee from his Father's house upon the account of the wrath of his brother Esau: he is hastened away to Padanaram; and on his way he comes to Luz, which afterwards, on the account of a notable emergent, was called BETHEL, where God signally appeared and discovered himself to him in great glory, suitably to his strait. Here he was benighted, ver. 11. and was obliged to ly in the open field. Some of the saints and servants of God have been put to great hardships, through the violence and rage of their persecuting brethren. But though Jacob's bed was hard, yet his rest was sweet; while he had a hard pillow of stone under his head, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and spake comfortably to him. God's time of speaking comfort to his people, is readily when they are most destitute of other comforts; then he is most kind, when brethren come to be most unkind.

You may observe two things, first, what God *shewed* to Jacob; and then, what he *said* to him.

1. What he *shewed* to him; he manifested to him his *glory*, as the God of providence, and the God of grace in Christ, who is here represented to him by the ladder reaching from heaven to earth, ver. 12.; and all the intercourse between heaven and earth is by this ladder.

2. What he *spake* to him, ver. 13. *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.* As the vision was suitable to his present case, letting him understand that he had a good guide, and a good guard, not only the angel of God, but

but the Lord of angels; ſo the words that God ſpake to him were ſuitable to his preſent need. The Lord ſpake from the top of the ladder; for all the glad tidings we receive from heaven, come thro' Jeſus Chriſt. Here are former promiſes made to Abraham and Iſaac, his father and grandfather, repeated and ratified to Jacob; whereby God intimated, that he would be the ſame to him that he had been to them. Here are freſh promiſes made to him ſuited to his preſent condition. He was to leave his kindred, and to want their preſence; God promiſed to be preſent with him; *I am with thee.* He was in the fear of Eſau: God promiſed, ſaying, *I will keep thee.* He was journeying to an unknown place: God promiſed to *keep him in all places whitherſoever he went.* He was apprehenſive he would never ſee his own country again: God promiſed he would *bring him again to that land.* He ſeemed to be left of all his friends and relations: God promiſed, ſaying, *I will not leave thee.* Providence ſeemed to croſs the promiſe, while he is thus going as an exile to a place far diſtant: God aſſures him of the performance of all he had ſaid, in due ſeaſon; *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* When God ſpeaks to his people, he ſpeaks to the point; he ſpeaks to the caſe; his words are ſuited to their preſent exigencies; and not only ſo, but to their future ſtraits alſo. Jacob knew not, but God knew and foreſaw what hardſhips he would meet with in his uncle Laban's ſervice; and in a ſuitableneſs to the event that was to take place, he aſſures him, ſaying, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* This was ſuch a gracious manifeſtation, and ſuch a wonderful intercourſe that God had with Jacob, as obliged Jacob to put a remark upon the place, and call it BETHEL, the *houſe of God*, the *gate of heaven.*

The text is not ſo much a *new* promiſe, as a repeated confirmation of what he had *before* promiſed, for eſtabliſhing and fortifying of Jacob's faith; for, ſays God, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that*

which I HAVE *ſpoken to thee of.* Where we may obſerve two things.

1. A *confirming* word concerning the iſſue; or what he would bring out of theſe promiſes, that they ſhall not be mere ſayings, but doings; *I will do what I have ſpoken to thee of.* Have I ſaid it, and will I not not do it? *In the end the viſion ſhall ſpeak.*

2. A ſupporting word in the *interim*, that faith may not faint in the mean time before the accompliſhment come, *I will not leave thee, until I have done it.* Jacob might think, Alas! it may be a long time between the promiſe now made, and the accompliſhment of it. What will become of me in the mean time? And, indeed, he had dark days, and hard ſervice before his hand; and there was long twenty years between Bethel-viſit here, where he met with God, and God ſpake to him in this manner, and Peniel-viſit, when he wreſtled with God and prevailed, and when God came to do for him ſome of the great things he had here ſpoken to him of. And in that interval of twenty years, between Bethel and Peniel, many viciſſitudes and changes, trials and difficulties occurred in Jacob's lot; but for this ſupport in the mean time, God aſſures him that he would never *leave him, until he had done that which he had ſpoken to him of.* Hence the doctrine I would ſpeak a little unto, is,

OBSERV. *That whatever dark and diſmal days may befal the children of God, upon the back of ſweet Bethel-viſits, that he allows to them; yet he will not leave them, till he hath accompliſhed all the Bethel-promiſes that he made to them.*

He *will never leave them, till he do what he hath ſpoken to them of.* He will go on, till he hath done as he hath ſaid. We may ſay of our Lord Jeſus, when once he hath ſpoken to a ſoul, and begun to do graciouſly, as Naomi ſaid to Ruth concerning Boaz, Ruth iii. 18. *Sit ſtill, my daughter, till thou knoweſt how the matter will fall: for the man will not reſt, till he hath finiſhed the thing this day.* Even ſo, when Chriſt hath begun

to

to ſpeak kindly, the poor believer may ſit ſtill and wait patiently, till the appointed time of accompliſhing his word; for, the God-man will not reſt until he hath finiſhed the thing. We may be *confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun the good work in us*, and ſaid the good word to us, *will perform it*, and finiſh it, Phil. i. 6.; *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

We find how this doctrine was verified, both in Jacob and his ſeed.

1. In Jacob's own *perſon*. After this diſcovery of God that he enjoyed at Bethel, many dark days, and much hard ſervice he endured, yet God did not leave him. When Laban caſt down his countenance on him, and ſaid, putting him in mind of his Bethel-viſit he made to him, and the Bethel-vow he cauſed him to make, Gen. xxxi. 13. *I am the God of Bethel.* Yea, God never left him, till he did what he ſpoke to him, both in proſpering him in the place where he was a ſtranger ſo long, and in bringing him back to his own land though he was in great danger; when Laban was purſuing him behind, and his brother Eſau meeting him in the face, yet God preſerved him according to his word, and brings him back to the land he promiſed to bring him to, and then ſends him to viſit Bethel, Gen. xxxv. 7. where he built an altar, and called it EL-BETHEL; that is, the *God of Bethel;* and ſo remarked the goodneſs of God to him, in not leaving him till he had *done all that he ſpoke to him of.*

2. In Jacob's *ſeed* this doctrine was verified, particularly with reference to the promiſe made to them, concerning their inheriting the land of Canaan, and expelling the Canaanites to make room for them. See and compare Joſh. xxi. 43,—45. with Joſh. xxiii. 14, 15. and 1 Kings viii. 56. God will take his own time of doing what he hath ſpoken; but he will be ſure to do it, whatever difficulties interveen between the promiſe and performance.

In handling of this ſubject, I would incline to obſerve the following method, through divine aſſiſtance.

I. What

I. What we are to understand by the *Bethel-visits*, that God may allow his people.

II. Consider some of the *dark days* that may follow upon these Bethel-interviews.

III. Consider and explain the *promise* here made, that he *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath spoken to them of*, notwithstanding of the dark days that may interveen between the promise and the accomplishment.

IV. Offer some *grounds* upon which the believer may be assured, that God *will not leave him, till he hath done that which he hath spoken to him of.*

V. Deduce some *inferences* for the application.

I. The *first* thing proposed was, To shew what we are to understand by the *Bethel-visits* God may allow his people. In order to this, I premise, it is sure none are acquaint with what we call a *Bethel-visit*, except these that are in a peculiar manner blessed of the Lord, as Jacob was, of whom his father Isaac said, *I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed*, Gen. xxvii. 33. They are the blessed objects of God's love, and the blessed heirs of the promises; brought into covenant with God, and joined to the Lord by converting grace and saving faith. And as none are acquainted with Bethel-visits but these that are thus blessed; so it is with great variety, that the Lord's people do enjoy such appearances of God. Though they have not all experience of Bethel-interviews with God, of the same measure and degree with that of Jacob; yet they have such experience of meeting with God as are substantially the same. Whatever difference there may be in circumstances: yet they are such, as they may call the place BETHEL the *house of God*, the *gate of heaven.*

In the illustration of this point, I shall here observe, 1. The substance. 2. The ordinary circumstances of such interviews with God as may be called Bethel-visits.

1*st*, The *substance*, or substantial part thereof, is God's gracious meeting with them, so as they may have it to say, *The Lord God of the Hebrews met with us*, Exod.

Exod. iii. 18. And that either in public ordinances, or in ſecret duties, by night or by day, in the city or in the field; and this meeting hath theſe two things eſpecially in it, which we find was in Jacob's meeting with God here in Bethel, the one is the manifeſtation of his glory, and the other is the communication of his mind.

1. This Bethel-viſit includes a *manifeſtation of his glory*. Jacob here ſees the glory of God in Chriſt repreſented as the ladder reaching between heaven and earth. Why then you may call that a Bethel whereever it hath pleaſed God to reveal Chriſt in you, and to open your eyes to ſee his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, as the way to the Father, and as the ladder by which you may aſcend up to heaven. Have you ſeen at this, or any former occaſion, Chriſt to be, as it were, the ladder ſet upon the earth, in his humiliation, and reaching unto heaven, and ſo that all the rounds and ſteps of the ladder are compleated in his incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and ſitting at the right-hand; *by him do we believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, that our faith and hope might be in God?* 1 Pet. i. 21. And have we thus, by faith, ſtept up the ladder, the only way? Hath thus the God that *commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhined into our hearts*, not our heads only, but our hearts, to give us the *light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo as our hearts have gone out after a revealed Chriſt? Well this is one ſubſtantial part of a Bethel-viſit, the manifeſtation of his glory.

2. This Bethel-viſit includes a *communication of his mind*. Jacob here not only hath God manifeſting his glory to him, but alſo communicating his mind as a promiſing God, ſaying, I am your father's God, *The God of Abraham and Iſaac;* and in teſtimony that I will be your God alſo, I will do ſo and ſo to you: and thus he communicates his mind to him by promiſes of grace. Why then, you may call that a Bethel-viſit, when God comes and intimates his love, or communicates his mind, and ſpeaks into your heart by ſome word of grace

grace and promiſe, opening up ſome ſecret truth of the goſpel to you, and opening your underſtanding to apprehend, and your heart to apply it, and cauſing you to hope in his word, as *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt. If God hath ſpoken a word to your heart, and made you take him at his word, ſo as you can look to him and ſay, *Remember the word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, wherever it was, you may ſay the name of the place was BETHEL, and that you *found him in Bethel, and there he ſpake to you*, Hoſ. xii. 4. Now, concerning theſe viſits, we may remark four things.

(1.) That the Lord may allow a Bethel-manifeſtation and communication to his people, and yet they may not *know that God is preſent with them*, in ſuch a manner as he is, till an after reflection thereupon. Hence ſaid Jacob here, ver. 16. when he awaked out of his ſleep, *Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not.* God's people may be ſurpriſed with his viſits, that tho' they cannot but be conſcious of his coming, when he approaches to them, yet they may not be ſure about the qualities of that viſit, whether it was a ſaving divine manifeſtation, till they come to examine and reflect upon it, and find that it was none other but the powerful preſence of God: for, they carry their own evidence along with them; *Surely he was here.*

(2.) Bethel-viſits fill the ſoul with a *holy awe of God*, ver. 17. *How dreadful is this place?* They that ſee God will ſee cauſe of holy trembling and bluſhing before him, and the ſight will humble and fill them with holy awe and reverence. Saving diſcoveries do not elevate and puff up with pride, but impreſs the ſoul with holy dread. The ſweet pleaſure and joy that attend the diſcovery is tempered with holy fear and awe, in ſo much, that they *fear the Lord and his goodneſs, and rejoice with trembling.* The place where God manifeſts himſelf is both a joyful and a dreadful place. Praiſe is the moſt joyful and heartſome exerciſe; yet God is ſaid to be *fearful in praiſes*, becauſe of the dread and awe of God that is on the heart of theſe that praiſe him; for, *Great is the glory of the Lord* which they ſee who *ſing in the ways of the Lord.*

(3.) Divine

(3.) Divine visits are *not excluded from any place*; even here, where Jacob little thought of meeting with God, here he meets with him, he finds him in Bethel, and says, *This is the house of God, and the gate of heaven.* Wherever we are, in the house or field, if we meet with God there, we may call it the *house of God*, and the *gate of heaven*: for, heaven is in his gracious presence.

(4.) Divine visits are *quickening*, ver. 18. He rises early in the morning, and sets about solemn worship of the God that appeared to him. He sets up the stone for a pillar, and anoints it as a memorial of what past, and gave the place a new name. As sweet communion we have with God ought to be remembered; so his grant of mercy calls for our return of duty, Jacob is here also quickened to vow himself away to the Lord, and promise to serve him; and, indeed, our vows and promises are then regular and evangelical, when they are the fruit of God's manifesting himself in the covenant of promise to us, and to Jacob here: for, whatever we promise, we can perform nothing but in virtue of his promise to us.

2*dly*, As to the *ordinary circumstances* of such Bethel interviews with God. Several of these may be gathered from the history of Jacob, and will be found to correspond with the believer's experience, as in these following particulars.

1. That in the Lord's ordinary way of dealing, when he deals effectually with poor souls, and when he hath a mind to bring them to a Bethel, he readily brings them to a *wilderness*, and there deals powerfully with them, and *speaks kindly to them*; or, to *their heart*. Thus here Jacob is in the wilderness, being banished from his father's house. Though he was a son of the promise, yet he was forced to run to a strange country. God allures his people, and brings them to a wilderness, and then speaks comfortably; gives them the *valley of Achor for a door of hope*. Some here readily have come to this communion, or the like, and have found themselves in a wilderness of confusion, darkness, and despondency, and yet had, ere all was

done, ground to call the place BETHEL, by reaſon of his meeting with them, and ſpeaking kindly to them.

2. The ſweeteſt diſcoveries of God are readily uſhered in with the *darkeſt nights*. God's viſit is ordinarily like the break of the day upon the back of a dark night. And, indeed, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*, Pſal. xxx. 5. As it was literally in the dark night that God viſited Jacob here; ſo you will ſee what a dark night of trouble, diſtreſs, and perplexity Jacob was in when he met with God at Peniel, and wreſtled with the angel and prevailed; *Jacob was left alone; and there wreſtled a man with him till the break of day*, Geneſis xxxii. 24. He had been before this compaſſed with clouds of fear on the account of Eſau, who was meeting him with four hundred men. You that are in a dark night of fear and diſtreſs may be encouraged to wait on, for readily the Lord uſhers in manifeſtations of himſelf with the darkeſt nights.

3. As the Lord is pleaſed to uſher in ſweet manifeſtations of himſelf with a dark night; ſo readily a *dark night follows* upon their ſweet manifeſtations.—— And many times they are as a blink before a ſtorm; and the people of God often find this to their ſad experience, making them ſee ground to be ſober after their ſweet experiences. Jacob had a good night in Bethel; but new ſtraits followed upon it, particularly in the hard ſervice and harſh treatment he met with from Laban. Here is a viſit; and preſently follows a night of trouble again. We mention this, not for your diſcouragement, but that you may not be ſurprized; for, there may be a ſudden turn in your ſpiritual affairs: *I ſaid, my mountain ſtands ſtrong; but thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

4. Sometimes the night that follows upon the Lord's manifeſting himſelf may be *darker*, and the darkneſs of it *greater* than the night they had before their Bethel-manifeſtation. Jacob was in a ſtrait before the Bethel-viſit, through the fear of Eſau; but after that kindly viſit, the ſtrait was greater, and the night darker, while

he

he had not only the fear, but the feeling of Laban's displeasure: perhaps you had a dark night before the Lord paid you a visit; but what if a darker night shall follow upon that visit, even some grievous temptation to raze all again. The church was brought to *the banqueting house, and his banner over her was love;* yet afterwards to the dark shadow, where she cries, *I sought him, but I found him not.* What a sweet communion had the disciples with Christ at the last supper! yet followed with the darkest night of temptation, trouble, and scattering: the shepherd of Israel himself being smitten, the sheep were scattered. When the Lord allows you sweet Bethel-interviews and blessings, you may mistake them, and think they presage nothing, but a life of joy and comfort henceforth, and that former trials are at an end; and yet they may be only preparations for approaching trials, and encouragements to faith and hope under future troubles. This leads me,

II. To the *second* thing proposed, which was to shew, what *dark* and *dismal days* may follow upon these Bethel-discoveries. There are these following dark days, or rather dark nights, that may follow upon Bethel-visits.

1. A dark night of *long absence*, a night of *weary desertion* may follow. Jacob had not, for twenty years, such a night as he had at Bethel: there may be long twenty years travel between Bethel and Peniel. Perhaps you had much heavenly-warmness by a live-coal from the altar, when God manifested himself, and you got a heart to close with Christ. The place was like a heaven upon earth to you; but, perhaps, many a weary day you have had since that time. May be you have never had such a gale since that time. Or, if this communion hath been a Bethel to you, think it not strange, though a night of absence and hiding may follow, and though the night be long.

2. A dark night of *forgetfulness* may follow upon the Bethel-visit, so as it is hard to know how secure people may grow; and they may lose the sweet im-

preſſion of the viſit, and have little or no kindly remembrance of the ſweet days they had at Bethel.—— This dark night followed upon Jacob's meeting with God here; it ſeems he had much forgotten it, till God puts him in mind of it, ſaying, Gen. xxxi. 13. *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and vowedſt the vow.* Jacob, might he ſay, do you not mind the time? do you not mind the place? do you not mind the two pillars? do you not mind the promiſe? do you not mind the Bethel, where I ſhewed my covenant to thee, and accepted thy vows unto me? Be not diſcouraged with the fear of Laban behind purſuing you, and Eſau before meeting you; it is enough to drive all fears and diſcouragements away, that *I am the God of Bethel;* I am the ſame God now, that I was at that day to you: however, Jacob had loſt the ſweet impreſſion, and loſt the kind remembrance of Bethel, till God himſelf was the remembrancer. In the dark night of oblivion, all may go out of ſight, and out of mind.

3. A dark night of *temptations*, *fears*, and *diſcouragements* may follow upon a ſweet Bethel-viſit. The gracious encouragement that God gave to Jacob afterwards, ſhews, what fears and diſcouragements he was under, and under which he was ready to ſink, if God had not ſupported and comforted him from time to time.——Well, even after a Bethel-viſit you may be grievouſly tempted, to call all that you met with but a deluſion; yea, to think it was Satan that was working with you, and not the living God; and to think that your coming to a communion-table was but a taking a ſeal of your own condemnation. Some may be tempted to fear that God hath a controverſy with them, and does not obſerve their affliction. It ſeems this was a part of the dark night that came upon Jacob; and therefore God ſhews him that it was an ungrounded jealouſy; *For*, ſays he, *I have ſeen all that Laban hath done to thee*, Gen. xxxi. 12. Though thou waſt not ſenſible of my care, yet I have all this time had a ſpecial care about thee, and increaſed thy ſtock, notwithſtanding

ſtanding of what Laban did. It is hard to believe the divine care in a dark day, wherein we apprehend his diſpleaſure; and yet when he returns, he can make us ſee he had a ſpecial care of us, when we know not of it; and that he hath been doing all things well, even when we were fearing all theſe things were againſt us.

4. A dark night of *wants* and *ſtraits* may follow upon Bethel-viſits; both outward and inward wants: temporal wants, ſuch as Jacob mention, when he complained that Laban had *changed his wages ten times*, Gen. xxxi. 41. Spiritual wants, and want of comfort, ſuch as Jacob was under, when in his ſtrait he could draw no comfort, even from an old Bethel, till God gave him a new viſit, by telling him, that he was the God of Bethel. Think not ſtrange, though, upon the back of Bethel-viſits, you be tryſted with great ſtraits, outward and inward, and perhaps can draw no comfort from a back-look upon Bethel; for, whenever you can draw comfort and encouragement from it, you may reckon it a new viſit; when, in a dark day, you can remember him from the *land of Jordan*, and remember what God did to you at ſuch a time.

5. A dark night of *perſecution*, even by friends and brethren, may follow upon Bethel-viſits, as Jacob found after this viſit, when perſecuted by Laban, his father-in-law, and Eſau his brother, that was conceived in the ſame womb with him, though God mercifully reſtrained their anger and fury, that they got not their will of Jacob; *For the wrath of man ſhall praiſe God, and the remainder thereof he will reſtrain.* Think not ſtrange then, even from Bethel-meetings with God, though you ſhould be tried with a dark night of perſecution, even from envious friends and falſe brethren. The church and ſpouſe of Chriſt ſpeaks of a Bethel, Song i. 4. *The king hath brought me into his chambers, we will be glad and rejoice in thee;* and yet a hot and ſcorching perſecution followed, verſe 6. *The ſun hath looked upon me.* Why? *My mother's children were angry with me.* There is hardly any perſecution more grievous and violent, than that of angry brethren; but

but they are under a reſtraint; they can go no further than God permits: only we need not think ſtrange to ſee church-perſecutions, even after Bethel-viſits.

6. A dark night of *backſliding* and *relapſe* into former unwatchfulneſs, ſecurity, and ſloth may follow upon the Bethel-viſit, though it was ſolemnly renounced at Bethel. Jacob ſeems to have been under a lamentable decay, as to the exerciſe of faith that once he had at Bethel, till once God returned and quickened him again. Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples after the communion, *Ye ſhall all be offended, becauſe of me this night;* you ſhall all turn your backs upon me: you may lamentably relapſe to theſe ſins that were renounced. I know not your particular caſe; but whatever it is, it hath been the ſad experience of God's remnant. You may relapſe to the omiſſion of known duty; yea, to the embracement of known idols, the very thing that parted between God and you. This is a ſad and ſorrowful night, that you need to take care you bring not upon yourſelves through unwatchfulneſs, in ſo provoking the Lord to anger with you, as he was with Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 9. It is ſaid *the Lord was angry with him, becauſe his heart turned from the Lord God of Iſrael, which had appeared to him twice.* What a ſad matter is it, if after a Bethel-interview with God you turn your back upon the God of Bethel! *Will you alſo go away?*

7. A dark night of *ſtrange diſpenſations* may follow upon Bethel interviews. Various trials, viciſſitudes, and changes, ſuch as was in Jacob's lot, between the time of Bethel-promiſes and Peniel-performances thereof; Jacob did not want chaſtiſements: *If his children break my law, I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquities with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail,* Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—33. God may cover your table at Bethel, but behold afterwards the ordinary means of relief may fail you, as it was with Jacob in Laban's family: even ſo, the means of ſpiritual relief may fail you. You may go to preachings, and return as dark as before. You may go to your cloſet, and

and that mean may fail you. You may go to public ordinances and sacraments, and these means may fail you. Though at Bethel you, perhaps, thought, Oh! I will never be what I have been; I will never do as I have done; I will never doubt nor fear any more: yet all this may be out of sight, and *the comforter that should relieve your soul, may be far from you*, Lam. i. 19. Strange dispensations may befal you. *All God's waves and billows may pass over you, and deeps call unto deeps*, Psal. xlii. 7.

8. A dark night of *perplexities* amidst these strange dispensations may follow upon Bethel-interviews. Thus it was with Jacob before he came off from Laban's house, he knew not what to do till the Lord directed him to *arise and return to the land of his kindred*, Gen. xxxi. 13. You may come to such a night of perplexities that you know not what to do, or what hand to turn you to. You may come to look upon yourself as in a perishing condition, and to say your *strength and hope is perished from the Lord. Remembering your affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall*, Lam. iii. 18, 19. What shall I say? May we not observe, with fear and trembling, that some who have met with God have afterwards come under dreadful and dark clouds both in point of *sin* and *misery!*—Some have been so far left to *sin* after manifestations, as deservedly to be called devils: Peter got such a discovery of God in Christ, that the Lord says to him, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: flesh and blood hath not revealed these things to thee, but my Father that is in heaven.* Yet instantly Peter is left so far to sin, that Christ says to him, *Get thee behind me Satan; thou savourest not the things that be of God*, Matt. xvi. 17, 23. And what think you of his denying his master with curses? Let us not imagine they are all strangers to Bethel-interviews with God that deny, or do not zealously own the cause and interest of Christ this day. But let us fear and tremble to consider how far the children of God may be left to depart from him and his way, in a dark time, and in a day of temptation. It is possible that good men may be left

left to sin, and to justify their sin. I will be loth to say, that they are all wicked that justify their sinful proceedings in public matters at this day, and that justify their persecuting rage and anger at their brethren, when I consider how Jonah justified his anger against God, saying, *I do well to be angry.* So it is possible that even some, that have met with God, may justify their anger at their brethren, saying, *We do well to be angry even unto death*, and angry even to suspension, deposition, excommunication *. I hope none need be offended, if I have charity for some that are of that opinion, thro' their ignorant zeal, while carried away like Barnabas, with the dissimulations of the day, and whose eyes God will open in due time, to see that their anger was as ill founded as that of Jonah's. For, if ever God met with them at Bethel, when he is pleased to return, their eyes will readily be opened, and they will see they did ill to be angry with their brethren that were contending for the rights of their mother's house: yea, another merciful turn upon their hearts will make them say, as Jacob's sons once did of Joseph, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother.* So we hope of some, if ever they have met with God at Bethel, surely upon the Lord's return they will regret their miscarriage, and say, *We have verily been guilty concerning our brother.*—However, as some that have met with God may come under dreadful clouds of *sin;* (for we are not to unsaint them all, and every one that are carried down the stream of defection, though we are to have no charity for their ways, yet let us not meddle with their state, till we see if God shall reclaim them) so in point of *misery*, some that have met with God may be put to say, Oh! he breaks me with breach upon breach, and runs upon me like a giant; yea, while *suffering his terrors*, they have in a manner been *distracted*, and sometimes *cursed the day wherein they were born.*——Thus you may see what dark days may follow upon Bethel-interviews

* Our author is here alluding to the conduct of the church-judicatories, in the prosecution, at this time, carrying on against the reverend Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, and his brethren, formerly laid open, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXIV. See likewise Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII.

with

with God; and, yet, after all, the promise stands good to all the seed of Jacob that have met with God at Bethel. He *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath spoken to them of.*

III. The *third* general head proposed was, To *consider* and *explain* this promise, *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* For *explaining* hereof there are these following questions that we would propound and answer. 1. How God *speaks* to his people? 2. How he doth or *accomplisheth* that which he hath spoken to them of? 3. *When* is it that he will do that which he hath promised? 4. What is the *import* of this privilege, that he *will not leave them?* 5. In what *sense* it is said, he *will not leave them, till he hath done what he hath promised?*

1*st*, How God *speaks* to his people, when they have a Bethel-visit of him? I answer, in a few words.

1. He speaks *divinely*, he speaks like himself, letting them know that it is he that speaks: as he said to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 26. *I thus speak to thee, am he;* so says he here to Jacob, *It is I that speak to thee; I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken. Never man spake like this man:* man's speaking only reaches the ear, but God speaking reaches and touches the heart. Hence,

2. He speaks *powerfully*, as it is said of Christ, *He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes:* so, when the Lord speaks, there is power and authority accompanying the word, either in its first coming, or in its after-working, upon the heart. *Ye received the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in you that believe*, 1 Thess. ii. 13,

3. He speaks *particularly*, as here to Jacob, *I will not leave* THEE, *till I have done that which I have spoken of to* THEE. People may hear the word delivered in general to all the congregation: but it doth them no good, till they hear it in particular spoken to them. Then God calls the person by name, and says To *thee* I speak; and the heart says, It is to *me* that God is

ſpeaking. O! hath God ſpoken to thee, man, to thee, woman?

4. He ſpeaks *kindly* and *comfortably;* Hoſ. ii. 14. *I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderneſs; and* then *ſpeak comfortably to her.* His kindneſs in ſpeaking appears moſt evidently when it is in a wilderneſs caſe he communicates himſelf: every word he ſpeaks to Jacob here, is a word of kindneſs. O the light, life, ſtrength, and comfort that the word brings when God ſpeaks it! He hath a view both to their preſent comfort and their future ſupport, when he ſpeaks with them in Bethel.

5. He ſpeaks *plainly* and not in parables? for he opens their underſtandings to apprehend, and their hearts to apply; *For to them it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven; to others it is not given,* Mat. xiii. 11. The word of grace is a ſealed book, till the Lion of the tribe of Judah open the ſeal.

6. He ſpeaks *ſuitably* to their caſe; for, he hath the *tongue of the learned, to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to the weary,* Iſa. l. 4. He adapts his words here to Jacob's weary caſe, as I ſhewed in the explication. He gives them a word that ſuits their difficulties. Sometimes they have difficulty about this, and ſometimes about that and the other affair, and they come with their burdens before the Lord, and he preſents a word relative to them.—Sometimes they are burdened about their *proviſion;* and he gives a word for that: *Bread ſhall be given thee, and thy water ſhall be ſure.*—They are burdened with *fears of danger:* and they get a word for that: *Fear not, for I am with thee: The eternal God is thy refuge.*—Sometimes they want *direction;* and get a word for that: *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight.*—They want the *Spirit;* and they get a word for that: *I will put my Spirit within you: and the water that I give ſhall be in you a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life.* They want *ſtrength* for duty or trial; and they get a word for that: *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be per-*

perfect in thy weakneſs.—They want *pardon ;* and they get a word for that : *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.*—They want to have *ſin ſubdued* and *mortified ;* and get a word for that : *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you.*—They want ſomething for the *church ;* and they get a word for that : *That the wall ſhall be built in perilous times ; that at evening time it ſhall be light ; and upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence.*—They want a bleſſing for their *children ;* and they get a word for that : I *will be thy God and the God of thy ſeed* *.

2*dly*, The next queſtion here, was, *How* he doth what he hath ſpoken to them ? *I will do what I have ſpoken of to thee.* Why,

1. He will do it *faithfully : Not a word ſhall fail of what he hath ſpoken*, Joſh. xxi. 45. The hiſtory of Jacob ſhews how faithfully God accompliſhed his promiſe, and all that he ſpoke to him ; and he hath *faithfulneſs for the girdle of his loins. God is not man, that he ſhould lye, nor the ſon of man that he ſhould repent.* He will do what he hath ſpoken, ſurely, and certainly ; *The viſion ſhall ſpeak, it ſhall ſurely come.*

2. As he will do certainly what he hath ſpoken, ſo he will do it *wonderfully*, and he will work wonders before he do it not ; *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, before one jot of his word fall to the ground.* And it is in a very marvellous and myſterious way, that God doth accompliſh his word through a world of dark diſpenſations, *through fire and water he brings them to a wealthy land.* Though impaſſable mountains be in the way ; yet he will come and do what he hath ſaid, and give his people occaſion to ſay when he comes, *It is the voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh ſkipping upon the mountains, leaping upon the hills.*

3. He will do what he hath ſpoken, and do it *remarkably.* Thus he did what he ſaid to Jacob ; and if the believer may put a remark upon the Bethel-viſit, when

* See a vaſt many more of the caſes of the ſaints ſtated and ſolved, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXVII.

he comes to promise; much more upon the Peniel-visit, when he comes to perform what he hath promised. In the Bethel-visit, we see him by faith in his word: but in the Peniel-visit we see him by sense in his work; for then he not only *says*, but *does* what he hath said, and shews himself *face to face*.

4. When he doth what he hath spoken, he doth it *surprisingly*. Jacob was not expecting such a way of God's accomplishing his word. Psalm cxxvi. 1. *When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.* He sweetly surprizes when he comes to do what he hath spoken: *Then was our mouths filled with laughter, and our tongues with songs: the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.* Again,

5. When he doth what he hath spoken, he doth it *gloriously*. His glory shines in all his works, and especially in accomplishing his promises, *that are Yea and Amen in Christ*. He makes the glory of his wisdom, power, holiness, the glory of his mercy, truth, and faithfulness to shine in the accomplishment; he doth more than he hath spoken, and is better than his word, Exodus xv. 1. When God accomplished his promise of delivering Israel out of Egypt, and out of the hand of Pharaoh and his host, then their voice was lifted up, saying, *I will sing unto the Lord; for he hath triumphed gloriously.*

6. When he doth what he hath spoken, he doth it *seasonably; The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3. It will not tarry beyond the appointed time, nor beyond the proper time; and therefore, let faith wait upon a faithful God, who will do as he hath said.—This leads,

3*dly*, To the third question, *When* is it that he will do what he hath spoken to them of? You may take the answer of this in the following particulars.

1. Some things he hath spoken relate to a day of *trouble*; and when that day comes he will do what he hath spoken to them of; *I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him*, Psalm xci. 15.——

Hence

Hence his people never enjoy more of his presence and pity, than in days of tribulation and affliction. And sometimes he lets the trouble come to an extremity, before he sensibly accomplish his promise of help, *I was brought low, and he helped me*, Psalm cxvi. 6.

2. Some things that he hath spoken to them of, relate to a day of *temptation:* and when that comes, then he will do what he hath spoken. He hath said, Rom. xvi. 29. *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* He hath said, 1 Cor. x. 13. *That he is faithful, and will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear; but with the temptation will make a way to escape.* And hence it is, for ordinary, in a time of great and grievous temptation, he opens some door by which they escape from time to time, while they wait upon him.

3. Some things that he hath spoken relate to a day of *work*, of great work that he puts into their hand; and when that day comes, he doth that which he hath spoken. He hath said, *That he works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. He hath said, that he *will strengthen, he will uphold with the right-hand of his righteousness*, Isaiah xli. 10.——And hence it is, that his people can sometimes say with Paul, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. Though we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, yet our sufficiency is of God.* And hence the church, Isaiah xxvi. 12. *Thou hast wrought all our works in us.* And David, Psalm lvii. 2. *I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performeth all things for me.*

4. Some things that he hath spoken of relate to a day of *warfare:* and when that day of bloody battle comes, he doth that which he hath spoken. He hath said concerning this, even he *who is the Captain of salvation; the Lord mighty in battle* hath said, for the encouragement of his soldiers, *Who go a warfare upon their own charges?* 1 Cor. xi. 7. *He is the strength of their salvation, that covers their head in the day of battle*, Psalm cxl. 7. And hence it is, that according to his

his word, his people are said *always to triumph in Christ Jesus*, and to be *more than conquerors*. See Psal. xviii. 30, 32, 34. *The word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in him. It is God that girdeth me with strength: He teaches my hands to war; and bows of steel are broken by mine arms.*——All their ability to stand in a day of trial and danger flows from this.

5. Some things he hath spoken of relate to the day of *death*: and when that comes, he will do what he hath spoken to them. He hath said, *Death shall be swallowed up in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54. He hath said, Hosea xiii. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction.*— And hence it is, that as all believers in Christ are blessed in death, for, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, and that sleep in Jesus*; so some believers have got the sensible and comfortable view of this, even when passing through that valley between time and eternity, and have fallen a singing in the midst of the valley, and saying, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* With the staff of the promise in their hand, they walk through Jordan dry shod.— And when the soul is separated from the body, then it enters into the *rest that remains for the people of God*, according to that which he hath spoken.

6. Some things that he hath spoken relate to a day of *judgment*; and when that day comes, then he *will do what he hath spoken to them of.* He hath said four times in one chapter; namely, John vi. *That he will raise them up at the last day*; and 1 Thess. iv. 12. *That if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so,* upon the same ground, and with the same certainty, *them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*; and *that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and meet the Lord in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord.* He hath

hath said, 1 Corinth. xv. 52. *That in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible: That this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality.* He hath said, Colos. iii. 4. *When he who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.* He hath said, Phil. iii. 21. *That he will change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.* He hath said, *That the saints shall enter into the joy of their Lord, and shall judge the world.*

What I have said, may give some light to the question, *When* will he do what he hath spoken to his people? He will do all that he hath spoken, partly here, and perfectly hereafter. He hath promised eternal life to the believer: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.* This he doth in part here, and to perfection hereafter; and we may appeal to every believer of any standing, if the promise of heaven and glory be not, even in part, allowed him here by a personal possession. He is possessed of heaven, not only,

(1.) By *union* to Christ, so as his Head is in heaven, Christ the Fore-runner having taken possession, and *gone to prepare the place for him;* so that he *sits with him in heavenly places;* but also,

(2.) By *communion* he hath some personal possession, if you consider what heaven is.—Is heaven a state of *light*, perfect light? The believer hath the begun possession of this, in so far as *he hath the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*—Is heaven a state of *liberty*, perfect liberty? The believer hath the begun possession of this, in so far as at any time his *bonds are loosed, and the Spirit of God is poured out upon him; where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*—Is heaven a state of *love*, perfect love? The believer hath the begun possession of this, in so far as *the love of God is shed abroad upon his heart, by the Holy Ghost*; and *the love of Christ constraineth him* to duty and service.—Is heaven a state of perfect *holiness?* The believer hath the begun possession of this, in so far as *he is sanctified in Christ Jesus, and going on*

to

to perfection: yea, is already perfectly holy in desire.—Is heaven a state of perfect *joy?* The believer hath this also in begun possession, when he is *filled with joy and peace in believing;* yea, sometimes *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*—Is heaven a state of *triumph* and *victory?* The believer hath the begun possession of this, when he boasts in the Lord, and says, *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ.*—Is heaven a place of *praise* and *wonder* at the grace of God, and the glorious perfections of God? The believer hath the begun possession of this also, when sometimes his heart is filled with the high praise of God, filled with wonder at his matchless love and distinguishing grace. He would invite all the world to wonder and praise. Yet, O what a small portion of heaven hath he here, in comparison of what he shall have! *He shall drink of the river of pleasure for ever.* Yet that part he enjoys here, is the earnest of the full possession, and the evidence that he *will do all that he hath spoken to them of,* concerning *grace and glory, and every good thing.*

4thly, The next question was, What is the *import* of this privilege, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of?* Why, how can it be said he will not leave them; when yet, after Bethel-visits and Bethel-promises given them, they may be trysted with such dark nights as I have been speaking of? For clearing this subject, there are these two remarks I would offer.

1. The first remark is, "That there are *some respects* wherein God may be said to *leave* people;" as,

(1.) When he takes away his *word,* his *candlestick,* his *ordinances,* and brings a famine, *not of bread and water, but of the word of the Lord,* Amos viii. 11, 12. This is the worst famine in the world.

(2.) When he takes away his *Spirit,* and *commands the clouds to rain no rain,* Isaiah v. 6. This is a fearful leaving; for, though the word and ordinances remain, yet, if the Spirit be away, then the word can do

do no good, it hath no power to convince or convert, to confirm or comfort.

(3.) When he takes away his *ear*, and doth not regard their prayers; when he doth not *suffer them to pray*, nor *answer their prayer*, but *shuts them out*, Lam. iii. 8.

(4.) When he takes away his *hand*, his help and assistance, and leaves persons to themselves, to their own lusts and counsels; *My people would not hearken, Israel would have none of me: therefore I gave them up to their own heart lusts; and they walked after their own counsels*, Psalm lxxxi. 11. Alas! a sad leaving! But then,

2. The second remark I offer is, "That there are "*some remarks* wherein God will *not leave* his people." Either,

(1.) He will never leave them *really*, but in *appearance*. And hence they many times think, and fear he is away, when he is really present; *Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not*, says Jacob. Or,

(2.) He never leaves them *absolutely*, but in some respect: he may leave them in respect of the *influence* of grace, though he doth not leave them as to the *presence* of grace. He may leave them in respect of *comfort*; though he may allow the influences of grace, yet he may deny the comfort of grace. He may leave them in respect of *assistance*, though he may allow them the comfort of grace, yet he may deny them that assistance and strength they want, and also the sensible answer of their prayers. Or,

(3.) He never leaves them *totally*, but in some degree. He may leave them to be buffeted by Satan; but will not leave them to be overcome by Satan. And he may leave them to be harrassed and captivated by strong corruptions; though he doth not leave them to be conquered thereby. Or,

(4.) He never leaves them *finally*, but for some time, he may *hide his face for a little moment, but with everlasting kindness will he have mercy on them*, Isa. liv. 7, 8. He will never leave them, so as to forget to do what he hath spoken to them of.

This promiſe then, *I will never leave thee*, it ſays, that *ſomething* of God is ever with them, and in them. They have in them *a well of water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. God loves to ſtay where once he comes, *I will not leave thee.*—It ſays alſo, that he will not *ſtay* away: though he hides himſelf out of ſight, he will not be long away.—It ſays, that in whatever reſpect he may be ſaid to leave them for a while, yet he will *return* to their joy; *Now you have ſorrow; but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*, John xvi. 22. —It ſays, there are ſome things God will never *deprive* them of, never take away from them. He will never take away his love and favour; *For he hath loved them with an everlaſting love.* He will never take away his covenant of peace and of promiſe from them; *The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed*, Iſa. liv. 10. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5.

5*thly*, The next queſtion is, In what *ſenſe* it is ſaid of Jacob, and of all the ſpiritual ſeed of Jacob, that God *will not leave them, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of?* To explain this a little further, I ſhall ſhew, 1. In what ſenſe we are to underſtand this *interim* promiſe, *I will not leave thee.* 2. In what ſenſe we are to underſtand this particle *until*, which ſeems to point at a period of this promiſe.

[1.] In what ſenſe are we to underſtand this *interim*-promiſe, *I will not leave thee?* Why, whatever way he may be ſaid to leave his people, yet,

(1.) He will never leave them *Godleſs*, but will ſtill be their God: for, his covenant with them is, *I will be their God:* they can never be ſo far left, but that God is ſtill their God, and they may ſtill go to him as their God.

2. He will never leave them *Chriſtleſs:* he hath given Chriſt, *the unſpeakable gift of God*, to them; and he will never recall that gift; *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance:* they ſhall ſtill have *Chriſt in them the hope of glory.* Hence,

3. He

3. He will never leave them *Spiritleſs:* he hath given his Spirit to you who are believers; and this anointing which you have received of him abides in you; *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,* John xiv. 16. The Spirit may be hid in the believer, but never abſent.

4. Hence he will never leave them *comfortleſs:* John xiv. 18. *I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.* However the *ſtreams* of their comforts may be abated, yet the *ſpring* of comfort ſtill remains; and hence the well of conſolation now and then ſprings up.

5. He will never leave them *helpleſs*, but ſtill be to them *a preſent help in time of trouble:* even when they have deſtroyed themſelves, yet in him is their help. He helps their infirmities when they cannot pray. He helps them up, when they are down. He helps them forward when behind.

6. He will not leave them *hopeleſs*, even when they are ſaying, *My hope is periſhed from the Lord;* yet he opens to them a door of hope in the valley of Achor. They are never again *without God and without hope in the world.* Their hope lives. Yea,

7. He will not leave them *faithleſs: For he hath prayed for them, that their faith fail not.* Their faith may indeed languiſh, and be like to give up the ghoſt, as that of the diſciples, when they ſaid, *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*; but now we doubt of this fundamental article of our creed. But when their faith was juſt at the failing, the Lord Jeſus reſtored and revived it.

8. He will not leave them *friendleſs* and *fatherleſs:* he is a friend that ſticks cloſer than a brother; and as *a father pities his children, ſo the Lord pities them:* as a father chaſtiſes his children, ſo the Lord chaſtiſeth them; as a father provideth for his children, ſo the Lord provideth for them, that they may not be in total want, between the promiſe and the time of the performance.—Thus he *will not leave them, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of.* He will not

leave dealing with them; he will not leave bleſſing of them; he will not leave guiding of them and guarding of them; he will not leave making all things working together for good to them, and working for the accompliſhment of his promiſe.

[2.] In what ſenſe are we to underſtand this particle, *until*, which ſeems to point at a period of this *interim*-promiſe. Surely the meaning is not, that when *he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of*, then he *will leave them:* but rather that then they will no more need ſuch an encouraging word as this, *I will never leave thee;* for then they will be free of all fear of his leaving them. But the word imports,

1. That there may be a *conſiderable time* between the *promiſe* and the *accompliſhment;* between the time of God's ſpeaking to them, and the time of his doing what he hath ſpoken. There was twenty years diſtance between theſe two in Jacob's caſe.

2. It imports, that in this interval God is *carrying on* his work: *I will not leave thee, until I have done it.* Saying and doing is all one to God, he ſpeaks the word, and it is done; and when he hath ſpoken the word, it is always a-doing, till he hath done it completely.

3. It imports, that though he be ſtill carrying on his work, yet it may *be hid from our eyes*, what way he is doing it; and though we may ſuſpect, on this account, that God hath left us, and left his work, when we do not ſee him with us, nor ſee what he is doing; yet he is not away, when he is delaying the accompliſhing of his word, to our ſenſe and feeling, but only taking his own time and his own way, *whoſe ways are* infinitely *higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.*

4. It imports, that this interval of time, wherein God is carrying on his work, though in a way hid from our eyes, is the *time of faith*, wherein we are called to wait upon a promiſing God, believing that not only he will be a performing God in due time, to our ſenſible feeling and experience; but that he is a performing God at preſent, making all interveening pro-

providences ſo many ſteps towards the accompliſhment of his word, though to carnal ſenſe and reaſon, they may ſeem to be ſo many letts and impediments to hinder the accompliſhment thereof. Joſeph had it revealed to him once and again, that he would be lord over his brethren, and that all the family ſhould yield obeyſance to him. How was this accompliſhed? Why, he is thrown into a pit; he is ſold into Egypt for a ſlave; and afterwards he is caſt into a priſon: theſe ſeemed all ſo many letts and obſtructions, in the way of ſuch advancement ——How could faith keep its ground here? unleſs it ſhould ſhut its eye upon providences, and open its eye upon providences, and upon a promiſing God, and then it would ſee all theſe ſeeming letts to be ſo many ſteps towards the accompliſhment of the promiſe, *I will not leave thee, till I have done what I have ſpoken:* therefore, let faith ſee and believe, that I am ſtill carrying on my work, and doing what I promiſed, whatever ſecret hidden ways I take to bring about my counſel; I am ſtill doing, and *will not leave thee, till I have done what I have ſpoken to thee of.*

IV. The *fourth* general head propoſed was, To offer ſome *grounds* of the doctrine, upon which the believer may be aſſured, that God *will not leave him, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to him of*, and that he will be all that he hath promiſed to him at Bethel.

1. Believers may be aſſured of it, upon the ground of the *unchangeableneſs* of God. There may be many viciſſitudes and changes in thy caſe: it is only the communion-day above that ſhall have no more night. Thou wilt certainly change, and change ere it be long: but dareſt thou ſay, God will change as oft as thou doſt? Thinkeſt thou that he will change in his love, when thou changeſt in thy frame? No; he will reſt in his love, *Whom he loves, he loves to the end.* Thy ſecurity ſtands upon God's immutability; *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed*, Mal. iii. 6.

2. Be-

2. Believers may be assured, that God will not *leave them, till he hath done what he hath spoken ;* and assured upon the ground of God's *foreknowledge.* What makes men many times alter their sentiments, is, because there are many things fall out contrary to what they projected ; but God foresaw what would be ; he foresaw that even after a Bethel heart-burning interview with God, thou wouldst grow lukewarm and indifferent ; yet notwithstanding of this, he met with you in Bethel, and spake with you there ; and therefore he *will do what he hath spoken to thee.* He foresaw what a prodigal, what a backslider you would be, yet he gave his word to you ; and therefore he will not go back.

3. You may be assured he *will not leave you,* believer, *till he hath done what he hath spoken :* because he is *faithful :* Heb. x. 23. 1 Thess. v. 23. *Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.* Though, when his *children break his law, and keep not his commandments, then will he visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes ; nevertheless his loving-kindness will he not utterly take from him, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. Once hath he sworn by his holiness, that he will not lye unto David,* Psal. lxxxix. 30,—35. *God is faithful who hath called you to the fellowship of his Son.*

4. Believers may be assured of this upon the ground of the *divine power ;* or, because God is *Almighty,* and able to do what he hath spoken. The apostle says, Rom. xi. 23. *The Jews shall be grafted in.* Why ? *For God is able to graft them in again,* having once promised it, and said that he will do it. It is enough to support our faith, that he is able to do what he hath said. Abraham's faith leaned upon the power of God, Rom. iv. 21. *He was fully persuaded, that he that had promised was able to be perform.* You may then be assured, believer, *that he will never leave you, till he hath done what he hath spoken ;* unless you can suppose, that he hath out-promised his own power, and said more than he is able to do.

5. It is evident he *will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath spoken,* if you consider the *experience*

of

of his people, and *your own experience*. The experience of God's people, from the beginning of the world, who have always found God to be as good as his word, and the same God, that he manifested himself to be at their Bethel-meeting with him. They have still found him to be the God of Bethel, whatever jealousies they entertained of his love; yet, upon their return, after their dark days was over, they found that his *word endureth for ever*, and that he never came short of his promise; but notwithstanning all their temptations, they were continually with him, holding them by his right-hand, Psal. lxxiii. 23. They still found him welcoming the returning prodigal, saying, *This my son was dead, and is alive, was lost, and is found*. Now, is it consistent with their experience? And will he take a singular way with you? Yea, thou darest not deny, believer, but thou hast found God to be still the God of Bethel, even though many times you were fearing that God would never smile upon you again; yet, upon your looking back to his holy temple, you have been made to say, O he is the same, and his *love is not altered nor changed; and that he hath not forgotten his promise*. Hence, how many times have believers reason to set to their seal to David's exercise and experience, Psal. xxx. 9, 10, 11. when he is crying, *What profit is there in my blood, If I shall go down to the pit;* They fell a praying, *Hear, Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be thou my helper;* and then have been made to say, *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing, thou hast put off my sackloth, and girded me with gladness*. May not then experience assure you, that *he will not leave you, till he hath done that which he hath spoken*.

6. The everlasting *nature* of the covenant of promise may assure you of this; *Though my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The bargain was not left to your making a covenant with him, but God himself made it with you; and therefore you shall *be kept by his power, thro' faith to salvation*. Though thou shouldst change a hundred times,

God

God will not change one word of the sweet bargain he made with you: because,

7. It is his *bargain* made with Christ; *I have made a covenant with my Chosen, and my covenant shall stand fast with him*, Psal. lxxxiv. 3. And hence, *If his children break my law, I will visit their iniquity with rods: nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not take from him*, ver. 30, 33. And because I will not take it from him, I will not take it from them. Your assurance then of his not *leaving you, till he hath done what he hath spoken*, may stand upon the everlasting love that he hath to Christ, and the standing bargain between Christ and him. He cannot fail you, because he cannot fail his Son in Christ, who hath sealed the covenant with his blood, and in whom therefore *all the promises are Yea and Amen to the glory of God*: and so the glory of God in Christ, the glory of his mercy and truth in Christ, obliges him to do as he hath spoken.

8. There is one ground of assurance more that I offer, as it lies in the bosom of the text, namely, the *divine will* and *pleasure; I* WILL *not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken*. I WILL NOT; it is my will and pleasure not to leave you till all be done. You have a word, 2 Sam. xii. 22. *The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake*: Why? *Because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people*. Thus it is said, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *The Lord set his love upon Israel*; Why? *Because he loved them*: he will, because he will. *And who hath resisted his will?* His will is uncontroulable; and hath he manifested his will in this, that *he will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath said?* Then you may be assured of it, for he will do all his pleasure; and well may you say, *Thy will be done*. The covenant of grace is made up of *I wills*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and downwards; I WILL *give thee a new heart; a new spirit* WILL I *put within you*: I WILL *take away the heart of stone*, I WILL *give you a heart of flesh*: I WILL *put my Spirit within you*, &c. ten or twelve *I wills*. And this part of the covenant, delivered by Jacob in the text, is like a crowning promise put upon

upon the head of all: *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* And what better aſſurance would you have than this, that God ſays, *I will?* What he will do, muſt be.

V. The *fifth* general head propoſed, was, To make *application* of the whole in ſome *inferences*. If it be ſo as I have been ſaying, hence ſee,

1. Whence it is that ſome may ſeem to be, of all men, the *moſt miſerable*, who are yet of all men the *moſt happy*; I mean *believers* in Chriſt, that are acquainted with Bethel-meetings with God, and to whom God hath ſpoken favourably and graciouſly.——They may ſeem to be moſt miſerable, in reſpect of the dark and diſmal nights that may follow upon their ſweet intercourſe with God; and yet are the moſt happy perſons in the world, in reſpect of their having God, binding and obliging himſelf *never to leave them*, till he hath performed all the gracious promiſes of the covenant to them: *This is the honour of all the ſaints:* God will not leave them, though they ſeem to be left by all the world. And God will do what he hath ſpoken to them of, though clouds and darkneſs, and mountains of difficulty ſtand in the way.

2. See whence it is that ſome may ſeem to be the moſt *happy perſons* in the world, who are yet the *moſt miſerable;* I mean, *unbelievers*, whether they be profane or profeſſors, that have no acquaintance with God in Chriſt. They may ſeem to be moſt happy people for a while, in reſpect they know not what it is to have a dark day, a day of trouble and adverſity; they have peace and proſperity in the world: *They are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men*, Pſalm lxxiii. 5. They have no fear either from church or ſtate. They have eaſy conſciences that can comply with every thing, right or wrong, that is impoſed upon them, whether by civil or eccleſiaſtical authority.—They can ſell truth, to buy peace, and ſo they live at eaſe; and yet they are the moſt miſerable, becauſe they are left and forſaken of God, and are not the children of the promiſe, to whom God hath ſpoken

peace; but the heirs of the threatening, againſt whom God hath denounced judgment, to whom he hath ſpoken wrath; yea, and *ſworn in wrath, that they ſhall not enter into his reſt; for there is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* And whatever temptations the people of God may be under to fret or grieve at their proſperity; yet, whenever the believer goes to *the ſanctuary, then will he ſee their end, and how they are ſet but in ſlippery places, and ſuddenly caſt down into deſtruction.*

3. Hence ſee, that the *ground* of faith ſtands immutable amidſt all changes. The moſt dark and diſmal days cannot hinder the accompliſhment of the divine promiſe; neither need any dark providence, or heavy diſpenſation, hinder the exerciſe of faith, and the life of faith in the divine promiſe. Nay, theſe croſs providences may rather further the life of faith, than hinder it: for, faith is never properly exerciſed; but upon the ſuppoſition of dark providences, croſſing and ſeeming to oppoſe the accompliſhment of the promiſe: becauſe, in ſuch a caſe, the ſoul hath nothing to do but to believe; nothing to look to but the promiſe; nothing to confide in but a promiſing God, and this is downright and honeſt believing; like that which our Lord Jeſus called the ruler of the ſynagogue unto, when news came that his child was dead, *Fear not, only believe*, Mark v. 36.; for then it is time for God to ſhew himſelf. Faith hath a *But* that can ſtand out againſt all the arrows of croſs providence that are ſhot againſt it; *Thou, O God, ſhalt bring them down into the pit of deſtruction: bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live half their days;* BUT *I will truſt in thee*, Pſal. lv. 23. He had been ſpeaking of many hard things in the way, ſuch as his being pained, becauſe of the voice of the enemy, and *the oppreſſion of the wicked*, ver. 3. *How they caſt iniquity upon him, and in wrath hated him;* yea, *but I will truſt in thee.* As God will accompliſh his promiſe notwithſtanding all the *Buts* that are in the way; ſo there is ground for faith to truſt confidently, becauſe God hath ſpoken; therefore no matter, tho' men and devils really, and dark promiſes ſeemingly, ſpeak to the contrary.

4. Hence

4. Hence see who are the *greatest blessings* to a church or nation. Surely these to whom God hath said, that he *will not leave them.* God hath not altogether left the church or the land where any such are in it: but if they were gone, then God is gone also; and *Wo to them when I depart from them, saith the Lord.* Some are fond to have God's people persecuted, and his saints banished out of their coast: they cannot bear their faithfulness and honesty, they are a torment to them; but yet what should become of a church or land if God's faithful remnant were gone: his presence would go with them, and none would remain behind to whom God hath said, *I will not leave them.* Then would that church be left of God, and wo would be to them. May we not say with the prophet, Isaiah i. 9. *Except the Lord had left us a very small remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrah?* Surely when a church begins to cast out the faithful from among them, then they begin to destroy themselves, and to bring down wo upon their own heads.

5. Hence see, where lies the *safety* of God's children, when they are cast out by their friends and brethren, as Jacob was in a manner cast out at all hands; he was the object of his friend and Laban's envy, and his brother Esau's spite and rage, which occasioned his being cast out of his Father's family, and the country of his kindred for twenty years. Well, but where was his safety? Why, when all other comforts left him, God said, *I will not leave thee till I have done what I have promised.* God's promise was his inheritance, and and God's presence was his guard, amidst all frowning providences: and so it is, and will be, with all the true spiritual seed of Jacob.——Whoever leaves them, God will not leave them; whatever men speak reproachfully against them, yet God speaks comfortably to them; yea, and whatever men do against them, God will do for them, and do all that he hath spoken to them of.

6. Hence see the *different state* of the church *visible* from the church *invisible* upon earth; or the differ-

ence between the true and faithful children of God, and any particular visible church. Why, all true believers have this promise secured in their persons, that God will never leave them till he hath accomplished all his promises of grace and mercy to them. He hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;* but it cannot be said of any particular visible church, that God will never leave them. God hath left many particular churches, and called them, LO-AMMI, saying, *Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God*, Hosea i. 9. And how far he may leave the church of Scotland, who can tell? The glory sometimes departs from the *threshold* to the *mountains;* and God seems to be making fearful removes from the present generation. I would not love to give any just offence, nay, nor to grate the ears of any hearers with reflections upon any that are but poor, mortal, sinful men, like ourselves, subject to the like passions, and clothed with the like infirmities: but I would desire to keep mine eyes on a higher hand than any sinful instruments of the church's misery and confusion. They could do nothing if God were not provoked by our sins to leave them to themselves, and to their violent measures. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?* May we not say of the church of Scotland, *Her rowers have brought her into great waters?* Ezek. xxvii. 26. But it is our sins that have provoked God to leave the rowers and managers, who could do nothing either against the sacred office of ministers, or the Christian rights of the people, except it were given from heaven, as Christ said to Pilate, *Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given.* As I love not to offend or grate any, as I said, so I would not be chargeable with sinful silence in such a time, when God seems to be saying, *Cry aloud, and spare not; tell the house of Israel their sins.* Wo would be to us, if we *should be afraid of man, that shall die; or the son of man, that shall be as grass*, Isaiah li. 12. May we not consider, as a matter of lamentation, how far God seems to have left the church

church of Scotland and her judicatories? I shall not assert, at this time, what I shall speak by way of supposition, and leave it to every one to judge whether it be matter of lamentation before God in case the supposition should be found a truth. And I shall speak in the first person of the *plural* number, that I may take in myself as having a hand, as well as others, in provoking the Lord to leave us.

If God hath left us and our judicatories to make *unscriptural* and *unwarrantable acts*, denuding the Lord's people of their just rights, and Christian privileges; would it not be lamentable?——If he hath left us so far as to make these acts *terms of communion*, so as none shall have communion with us that dare oppose these unwarranted proceedings.——Again, if he hath left us so far as to indulge *Arians* and *Blasphemers*, and deal gently with these that are guilty of fundamental errors, and yet to proceed violently and furiously against some of the friends of truth, and to shew hardly so much regard for the supreme authority and dignity of the Son of God, as we shew for the supreme authority and dignity of our erring assemblies; if this were so, would it not be lamentable?—If God hath left us so far as to destroy ourselves by sacrificing a *covenanted reformation* and *covenanted principles*, together with the *sacred office of ministers*, and the *spiritual rights of people*, that would adhere thereto, and all unto what we call church authority and good order, which yet is but another name for church tyranny, and dreadful confusion; would not this be very lamentable?—If God hath left us to cast out of our bosom some that are, perhaps, the *friends and favourites of heaven*, and that, because of their faithful testimony against the evils and defections of the day; would not this be lamentable, and evidence that God hath very far left us *?—These and many other things I might suppose.

* That these particulars, suggested here only by way of *supposition*, are but too just, nay, positive *facts*, may be seen evinced above, Vol. I. pag. 238. Vol. II. pag. 304, 305. 466. Vol. III. pag. 148.—See also Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXIV.

What

What is the world saying, but that our *rowers have brought us into great waters*? Ezek. xxvii. 27. What is this they are saying of the judicatories of the church of Scotland in our days? Are people saying, that God hath left us and our judicatories, so far as to make unscriptural and unwarrantable acts, and impose sinful terms of communion? *&c.* Are they saying, that Bethel is turned to Bethaven? That Philadelphia is turned to Laodicea? It would be good news if there were no truth in what the world are now saying of us. But if there be any truth in it, then surely God hath left us very far; and who knows how far he may yet remove? Better sword, famine, and pestilence among us than that God should utterly leave us. But how far soever he may leave a visible church, yet he will never leave his invisible remnant: for to them he hath said, *I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

7. Hence see reason to try what *side* you are upon, whether you be a *Jacob* or an *Esau*. They were born of the same mother, and lay in the same womb, but the one was blessed and the other cursed. You may be of the same mother-church, yet *born after the flesh, and not after the Sprit*. If you be the true seed of Jacob, then you will know something of a Bethel-interview with God. Hath God ever brought you to a wilderness, and there met with you, and spoke comfortably to you? Have you ever seen the glory of God in Christ as a ladder to heaven, *The way, the truth, and the life*, so as you were made to close with him, and ascend up to God by this ladder? *For, by him we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.* Have you heard God speaking to you, and communicating his mind, or discovering himself as a promising God in words of grace to your humiliation, sanctification, and consolation? O man, woman, if all places be alike to you, so as you never met with God in a place that might be called BETHEL; and if all words of scripture be alike to you, so as you know no

no word on which *he hath caused you to hope, you are yet a stranger to Israel:* but if you can point at the place where the Lord God of the Hebrews met with you once a day, so as you can sometimes look back upon it with pleasure, saying, O! I thought it was a BETHEL, a *house of God;* and if you point at the word with which God opened your heart, as he did the heart of Lydia, and made it the porch both of holiness and comfort, it is good. Did he make the word to you, as it was to Job, *Better and more precious than your necessary food;* and as it was to Jeremiah, *The joy and rejoicing of your heart;* and as it was to David, *Sweeter than the honey, or the honey comb,* and the very ground on which *he hath caused you to hope?* and are you from that time to this still *hoping in his word,* when the Lord restores your soul out of its sleepy fit? Why, then, it seems you are a child of promise, to whom God hath said, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

8. Hence see the duty of all who hear me, both unbelievers and believers.

[1.] Ye that are *unbelievers,* and know not the God of Bethel, but are *strangers to the covenant of promise, living without God and without hope in the world; living in the lusts of the flesh;* poor, wretched, worldly creature, drunkard, whore-monger, Sabbath-breaker, or hypocrite, that may be comes to communions, but never had communion with God there, and never came out of Sodom to this day, that was never brought to a wilderness of fear and despair, and then to a Bethel of hope and comfort in God, as a promising God in Christ; I would tell you your duty in two words.

(1.) It is your duty to *consider the dangerous state you are into.* And I must tell you a terrible word for awakening your seared conscience, if God would bless it for that end. As you have been hearing that God is bound, by his own *promise,* never to leave his children, till he doth that which he hath spoken to them of in the gospel: so, on the other hand, that same God is bound and obliged, by his *threatening,* if you remain in that state, never to leave contending with you, until

until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken of in the law; that is, you are under the *curſe of the law*, and God is obliged to curſe you. He that is faithful to his promiſe, and will accompliſh it to all that flee in to Chriſt, is as faithful to his threatening, and will accompliſh it to all that remain out of Chriſt.———What a trembling heart would you have, man, woman, if you were but in Paul's caſe, when more than forty men bound themſelves with an oath, that they would not eat or drink till they had killed him? If ſo many men were bound under oath to kill and deſtroy you, I ſuppoſe it would take ſleep from your eyes, and make you reſtleſs how to eſcape their fury; and yet their oath could relate but to a temporal life. But tremble and fear to think, that the great God is bound, by ſolemn oath, to damn and deſtroy you to all eternity, if you remain in that Chriſtleſs ſtate; *He hath ſworn in his wrath, that you ſhall not enter into his reſt*, Heb. iii. 11.

(2.) It is your duty to *flee from this wrath to come*, by fleeing to Bethel, to the God of Bethel, to a promiſing God in Chriſt. You will never go to heaven, if you go not to Bethel by the way; I mean, if you remain ſtrangers to Chriſt. Think not theſe are words of courſe that we are ſpeaking to you; for, as *knowing the terrors of God, we perſuade you* to flee out of Sodom, and away from the divine wrath: ſo, I hope, knowing the *comforts of God*, as the God of Bethel, we would perſuade you to come and ſee what is to be ſeen at Bethel, and to come and hear the voice of a promiſing God that is to be heard there. *What we have heard and ſeen, may we not declare unto you*, that there is ſuch a thing as Bethel-interviews with God? And wo to us who are miniſters, if we be preaching to you an abſolutely unknown God, an unknown Bethel, an unknown Jeſus! If we know neither the terrors nor comforts of God at any time, I think we would have no commiſſion to ſpeak any of them to you, my dear friends, whom I never expect to ſee all again in our preſent circumſtances, till we ſee Chriſt coming in the clouds

clouds of heaven. In the fear of God, and in the faith of our meeting together before his tribunal, I would tell you, that the great day's meeting we shall have, will be terrible to you; if before you leave this world, you know nothing of a Bethel-meeting with God, as a promising God in Christ.

Therefore, let me *exhort* you, in the last of the feast, and in the prospect of the great day, to come to Christ, in whom *all the promises are Yea and Amen, to the glory of God.* Come to him, by owning that you cannot come of yourself. Come to him, by crying to him, that he would draw you. Come to him, by believing that you cannot believe as you should. Come to him, by believing that you are cursed, wretched, and undone without him, and that you shall be blessed and happy in him. Come to him, by believing that you have no righteousness but guilt, no strength but weakness; and that *in the Lord only you have righteousness and strength.* Come to him, by believing that you have nothing, and that he hath all; and that you can do nothing and he can do all for you. Come to him, by imploring him to be your *Prophet, Priest, and King; your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* Come to him, not upon such and such terms and conditions, that you are ready to dream you must come up to: but come to him, by coming down to his terms; that is, to be willing to be saved by free grace. *Come down, Zaccheus, for this day salvation is come to thy house:* so, say I, come down, sinner, from the tree of legal qualifications, and legal hopes, built upon your own naughty duties. Come down, for you cannot save yourself by all your climbing, nor bring salvation to yourself; but *this day salvation is come to your house:* salvation is come to you, because you cannot come to it; salvation is come to your hand: salvation is come to your heart. The Saviour is knocking at the door of your heart, and calling you to come down, and take the free salvation that is come to you; *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* It may be this shall be the last communion you shall see

in time, and the laſt communion-offer that ever you ſhall hear; or, if you be ſpared in time, it may be the laſt communion you ſhall have with peace in the church of Scotland; it may be ſo, and it may be otherwiſe; only we have had long forty years peace, and it is poſſible the preſent emergencies in this church may be the beginning of ſorrows: but whatever be a-coming, as death and judgment is certainly coming upon you ſpeedily, it is ſafeſt for you *to come to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant;* let not the laſt offer be ſlighted: Oh! let us not part with one another, till there be good ground to hope, we ſhall not part with Chriſt. Alas! I fear before this day eight days, yea, perhaps, *before the cock crow twice*, this offer of Chriſt will be forgotten and out of your head. Some pitiful trifle in a world will take all out of your heart; but I here take your conſcience to witneſs, forget as you will, that this offer ſhall not be altogether in vain, though it ſhould be ſlighted; for, when the book of conſcience ſhall be opened at the great day, this ſhall be called to remembrance, that ſuch a day at Abbot's-hall, after a communion there, Chriſt and ſalvation, from ſin and wrath, came to you to be freely received, and yet you rejected it; and this will contribute to glorify the juſtice of God in condemning you, and make it evident to all the world, *that he is clear when he judges.*

Wo is me, if there be not ſo much as a deſire kindled in your heart after our glorious Lord! If you think eternal ſalvation worth your while, O ſinner, and this offer of it no contemptible thing, then I may *adviſe* you to ſet ſome little time apart, after this occaſion is over, and betake yourſelf to ſome place, whether in the houſe or the field, where you may have a little retirement from the world, and there cry to God, that he may follow this offer and this occaſion, with power upon your heart for drawing you to the Lord and his way; while you are thus employed, who knows, but before you come from your knees, the place may become a BETHEL, a *houſe of God*, where you will ſee and know him as a promiſing God in Chriſt Jeſus; for,

for, in this way some have had a meeting with him that they will never forget. O! be restless in waiting on him in the use of all appointed means, till he manifest himself to you savingly; for, when once he doth so, you may be sure he will never leave you, till he hath perfected the good work according to his promise.

[2.] To you that are *believers* in Christ, and know what it is to have some Bethel-interviews with God, either at this occasion, or formerly. Are you in this happy state, and have God for your close companion, who having begun to do good, *will not leave you, till he hath done all that he hath said to you*? Your duty is both to be *joyful* in your *promising God*, and *fruitful* in the *work of faith*.

(1.) In the faith of this promise, you ought to be *joyful*. Is it nothing to you, that God himself is your everlasting companion, saying, *I will not leave you*? That he is a promising God to you, and hath condescended to speak to you? That he is your agent, to do what he hath spoken? And that he hath bound himself never to *leave you, until he hath done what he hath spoken*? O! whatever dark days may come, it is your duty to be joyful in him: *Though the earth should be removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea;* here *is a river that makes glad the city of God;* that makes glad the children of God: *God is in the midst of them;* and hath said, *I will not leave you.*

OBJECT. *Alas! but may a child of God say, How can I take in this comfort, when I find the Lord hath left me? Though he said once,* I will never leave you, *yet it may be a delusion; for I feel the contrary in many sad effects of his absence.*

O unbelieving believer, will you, with Thomas, never believe, till you feel! The ground of your faith is God's promise, and not your feeling. But, for satisfying the soul, that may be under a dark cloud of desertion, saying, *The Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten;* sin prevails, and God is out of sight; I would have you to remark, That there are tokens of

God's presence with you, believer, even when you do not observe them, by reasons of the clouds that are upon you: For example, whence is it that you are not *swallowed up* like a ship in a whirlpool; and that there is some secret grain of hope in the heart, even when your unbelief is ready to say, *My hope is perished*? Why, the reason is, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you are like the *burning bush*, all in a flame many times, and yet not consumed; burning, but not burnt; flaming, but not consumed? You do not observe this; yet it is observable, that you are preserved to this day, to this hour, amidst the flames of temptation, and the floods of corruption: why? the matter is, he hath not yet left you.—Whence is it that you can never give *over duties altogether;* and, however the tempter prevail to slacken your hand, yet you cannot for your heart give up with religious people, and with all religious duties, wherein you think communion with God may be had? Why, the reason of this is, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you do not *break God's prison*, through utter despondency, and go away, and take your pleasure with the rest of the wicked world? Even when you are in the prison of desertion and unbelief, you dare not think of bidding farewel to God, or departing wickedly from him, or of bidding the Almighty depart from you; nay, is there not something in your heart, even at your worst, that says, O! if he would come! O! when will he come? This says, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you cannot *agree with sin*? The more it prevails upon you, the more you abhor it, and abhor yourself for it, and dare not give way to it. Doth not this evidence there is some secret power and presence of God with you, and that he hath not yet left you.—When is it that when you *stray from your true resting-place*, you cannot *rest any where else*, and can find no quiet in your mind, till you be back again? Possibly you fall a seeking rest and peace in the creature, in the world, in recreations and diversions, and perhaps in your duties, and yet there was something in your heart, that said, Oh! it is not here

here, it is not here; you find vanity written on all, till you return to your firſt Huſband.——Again, Whence is it, that at your *worſt* the leaſt word of news from him concerning his *return*, makes your heart *leap within you for joy*, as the babe in Eliſabeth's womb, at the ſalutation of Mary, while the news of his return, and the hope of his coming again gives you a glad heart? Surely he is not far off; and even when you are moſt ſecure and ſtupid, moſt dead and dull, there is a ſecret wiſh at the bottom of your heart; O for ſuch a day again, wherein the candle of the Lord ſhined on me! *O that it were with me as in months paſt!* —Whence is it, that the *outward ſhell of ordinances* cannot content your heart, without the *kernel of communion and fellowſhip with God?* And that the dead letter of the word cannot pleaſe you, without the living Spirit accompanying it? Why, he hath not left you to be content with any thing without himſelf.—Whence is it, that the *intereſt of Chriſt*, is *your intereſt*, and that you cannot join with the defections of the day, nor ſide with the errors of the times, but ſtill deſire to be on Chriſt's ſide? Why cannot you turn with the tide of the times? Even becauſe the Lord hath not altogether left you.—In a word, Whence is it, that the *leaſt diſcovery* he makes of himſelf is *joyfully welcome to you*, when he, as it were, but ſoftly knocks, ſilently tirles at the door of your heart; *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him?* Song v. 4. When he ſeems to be on his way to you, you are ready to ſay as Laban to Abraham's ſervant, Gen. xxiv. 31. *Come in thou bleſſed of the Lord.*—Well, whence are all theſe things, but from this, that he is *ſtill preſent*, though you ſee him not, and that he hath never altogether left you, but is ſtill remembering his promiſe, *I will not leave thee?*

(2.) It is your duty to be *fruitful* in the *work of faith*. O believer! give glory to God, by believing that he *will not leave you, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to you of*. Dark and cloudy days, that may follow upon Bethel-interviews cannot hinder God's doing

ing what he hath ſpoken: and therefore, let it not hinder your believing that he *will do what he hath ſpoken to you of.* Hath he ſpoken to you of *pardoning your ſins?* And hath he ſpoken to you of *ſubduing your corruptions?* Hath he ſpoken of *ſupplying all your wants?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *bearing your burdens?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *healing your diſeaſes?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *proviſion* and *through-bearing in the world?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *protection* in time of danger? Hath he ſpoken to you of *ſatisfying your deſire?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *guiding you by his counſel*, and *bringing you to his glory?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *trials*, that he *will ſupport and uphold with the right-hand of his righteouſneſs?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *ſeed*, that he *will be your God*, and the *God of your ſeed?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *death*, that *death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *eternal life*, that you *ſhall be for ever with him?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *love*, that he hath *loved you with an everlaſting love?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *Spirit*, that *his Spirit ſhall be in you as a well of water, ſpringing up unto everlaſting life?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *bleſſing*, that he hath *bleſſed you*, and ye *ſhall be bleſſed*, and that *in bleſſing he will bleſs you?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *preſence*, that he *will never leave you nor forſake you*, that he *will be with you in trouble?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *care* about you, that he *will make all things work together for your good?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *abſence*, that he *will return*, that he *will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *anger*, that it *endureth but a moment*, and that with *everlaſting kindneſs he will have mercy on you.*——Whatever he hath ſpoken, O give him the glory of his truth, by believing that whatever he ſeems to be doing by outward frowning providences, yet he *will never leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken to you of.*——It is your duty to keep your eye ſhut upon dark providences, and to keep your eye open upon the clear promiſe?

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Has he said, he *will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath said?*——Then wait upon him in the due use and improvement of all means, till he do his work, and do not leave him. Return his promise by your practice, saying, Lord, hast thou said, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken*? Behold, through grace, I resolve I will not leave thee, until thou hast done what thou hast spoken: *He is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him.* Hath he said, and promised to this effect? Then, O put a favourable construction upon all his frowning dispensations! According to your faith of his promise, and of his favour therein, such will be your faith of his favour amidst all afflicting providences.——Whatever distress and difficulty you meet with; yet let faith still say, for all this, I hope he will do as he hath spoken: for all this, I will not quit my hold of him, but hope in his word.

O believer! remember that whatever God hath said to thee, he hath said it with a *surely*, as he said to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 12. *I will* SURELY *do thee good.* And when Jacob came to a strait, he put God in mind of it, *Thou didst say, I will surely do thee good*; and therefore let your faith be acted with a *surely*, grounded upon the truth and veracity of God, saying with David, Psal. xxiii. 6. SURELY *goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. We live by faith, and not by sight;* and therefore, though dark days should come, you ought to believe when you cannot see, *And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance of these things which were told her from the Lord*, Luke i. 45. *The word of the Lord endureth for ever*, Psal. xix. 9.

Let the faith of the promise appear in your sanctification, holiness of heart, speech, and behaviour. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Let it be evident to all the world you converse with, that *now you*

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are clean, through the words that he hath ſpoken to you. He that hath this faith and hope, purifieth himſelf; for faith brings all its purity out of Chriſt; or, which is all one, out of the promiſe, which is *Yea and Amen in Chriſt.* The faith of God's love will work by love to a holy God, and his holy ways: therefore, O believer! let your life be a life of faith; and reſolve, through grace, to live and die in the faith of his love, which he himſelf expreſſeth in this promiſe, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

SERMON

SERMON LXXXIX.

The COMBINATION and CONJUNCTION of JOYS; or, the JOYFUL APPROACH of the SAVIOUR, chearfully Welcomed by the CHURCH'S ECHO of FAITH *.

PSALM xl. 7.—*Lo, I come!*—
SONG ii. 8. *The voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh!*

WE have a communion-solemnity in view: but if the question be proposed, *How shall we have communion with God at this occasion?* Two things are necessary to it. 1. His *coming to us graciously*: there is no communion with him to be expected, unless he come: so he saith in the first text here, *Lo, I come.* 2. Our *apprehending his approach*, and giving him *welcome entertainment*, upon his coming: then, and not till then, have we communion with God, when we hear his voice, and see him, as it were, on the tops of the mountains, and say, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

In the words complexly viewed, we have two things more generally. 1. Here is intimation *given* to the church, by the Lord Jesus; *Lo, I come!* 2. Here is notice taken by the church; *Behold, he cometh!* Here is the *joyful voice* of the Son of God; *Lo, I come!* And here is the *joyful echo* of the church; *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Mark the *frame* HE is in when he speaks of his coming; it is a *joyful* frame;

* This Sermon was preached on Saturday the 27th of April, 1734. being the preparation-day before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Abernethy, upon the 28th. The second impression.

Lo, I come! I delight to do thy will, O my God. And observe the *frame* SHE is in, upon the intimation of his coming; it is a *joyful* frame; *Behold, he cometh!* He speaks with a joyful *Lo; Lo, I come:* and she speaks with a joyful *Behold; Behold, he cometh!*

These two words being all the subject I proposed to speak of, at the time, I shall refer the further explication of them to the prosecution of this doctrinal observation.

DOCT. *That Christ's coming to his people graciously, in their time of need, is a joyful and delectable coming, both to him and them.*

The time wherein CHRIST said here; *Lo, I come!* was a time of great need, even when *sacrifice and offering would not;* when there was no hope of salvation from any other quarter, unless he himself had undertaken it: then said he, *Lo, I come!*——The time wherein the CHURCH here said, *Behold, he cometh!* was a time of great and felt need; for the Lord had withdrawn himself behind mountains of sin and guilt, till he paid a new visit, that made her cry out with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

That Christ's gracious coming to his people, is joyful both to him and them, will appear in the sequel; only it is enough here to demonstrate it, that as HE is a *joyful* proclaimer of his own approach, saying, *Lo, I come!* So SHE is the joyful beholder thereof, saying, *Behold, he cometh!*

The method I would here endeavour to observe, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, shall be the following.

I. To observe what *comings* of Christ to his people are joyful to him and them.
II. Show what makes his coming joyful to *him.*
III. What makes his coming joyful to *them.*
IV. What *expressions* of joy *in him* are imported in in his, *Lo, I come!*

V. What

V. What *expreſſions* of joy in *them* are imported in their *behold;* BEHOLD, *he cometh!*

VI. Show whence is this *combination* and *conjunction of joys;* or, why it is that, like a reſounding echo, his *Lo, I come*, is anſwered, with a *Behold, he cometh.*

VII. Deduce ſome *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. The *firſt* thing propoſed was, To obſerve what *comings* of Chriſt to his people are joyful to him and them. Here I ſhall mention only four comings of the Lord Jeſus, namely, his coming in the fleſh; his coming in the clouds; his coming in the word; and his coming in the Spirit.

1. His coming in the *fleſh* was a joyful coming both to him and his people. The firſt text here is particularly applied to his coming in the fleſh, Heb. x. 5, 7. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, a body haſt thou prepared me; then ſaid I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of thy book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.* Which ſhows alſo, that this was a joyful and delightful coming, though it was upon that errand of being a ſacrifice to divine juſtice for our ſins, when no other ſacrifice would do the buſineſs. And ſurely this coming of Chriſt is a joyful coming to his people, and brings ground of joy unto all people; *Behold*, ſaid the angels to the ſhepherds upon Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, *I bring good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be unto all people; for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 10. And it is probable, as many divines ſhow, that theſe words of the ſpouſe here, ſaying, *Behold, he cometh!* hath a particular reference to Chriſt's coming in the fleſh. The Old-teſtament ſaints *ſaw his day afar off, and rejoiced* in the view they had of it by faith. They ſaw him coming ſkipping in the dark mountains of ſhadows, and ceremonies, and typical ſacrifices, to be the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows. In a word, his coming in the fleſh is the very root and foundation of the joys of all the redeemed: if he had not thus come,

according to the promiſe, they would never had any ground of joy; but faith's view of this coming, or of God in our nature, God incarnate, *God made manifeſt in the fleſh*, is a fountain-head of joy; *God being in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf;* being *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh:* and we having acceſs to God through him, who became like unto us in all things, except ſin. O Sirs, do you believe that there is a man in heaven called IMMANUEL, *God-man?* We read of *joy and peace in believing:* ſurely you never believed there was ſuch a man, God in our fleſh, if it never afforded any joyful thought to you.

2. His coming in the *clouds* is a joyful coming, both to him and his people: this is what is called *his ſecond coming*, Heb. ix. 28. *To them that look for him, he will appear the ſecond time, without ſin unto ſalvation.* And, indeed, this will be a joyful coming to Chriſt; for it is a coming to ſalvation: when he comes to ſave, he comes always joyfully. When he came firſt to ſave, by the price of his blood, he came leaping and ſkipping joyfully; and much more when he will come to finiſh the work of ſalvation, and to perfect the ſalvation of all the redeemed. His coming to marry his people is joyful to him, much more when he comes to conſummate the marriage. Chriſt had an eye to this in his coming to ſuffer: *He endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame, for the joy that was ſet before him*, Heb. xii. 2. even to the joy of an exalted ſtate: and, you know, that the laſt ſtep of his exaltation is his coming to judge the world at the laſt day; then he will *be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe.*—And as it is a joyful coming to him, ſo it is to his people. It is true, it will be terrible to his enemies that ſlighted his coming to ſave, and neglected the great ſalvation; for, *He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel*, 2 Theſſalonians. i. 8.———His ſecond coming will be dreadful to them that do not welcome his firſt coming: and, *Behold he cometh in the clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo that pierced him, and all nations ſhall wail becauſe of him*, Rev.

Rev. i. 7. But to his people, to his followers and ſervants, to all that welcome him now, his coming is joyful; they will welcome him with joy, ſaying, *Even ſo, Come, Lord Jeſus.* They long for his coming; and they are called to lift up their heads with joy, becauſe *the day of their redemption draweth nigh.* They cry to him to haſten his coming, *Haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe or young hart on the mountains of Bether.* No wonder, for then they *enter into the joy of the Lord.* Chriſt, who here ſays, *Lo, I come!* will as certainly come the ſecond time, as he came the firſt; and as he came the firſt time, in order to his coming the ſecond; ſo he ſpeaks of his ſecond coming with a *behold; Behold! I come quickly*, Revel. xxii. 20. And the church's joyful echo follows, *Even ſo, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

3. His coming in the *word*, to court a people for himſelf, is a joyful coming to him and to his people; for then, as it is, Rev. xxii. 17. Both *the Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come.* The Spirit of Chriſt, and the bride of Chriſt, joyfully invite ſinners to come to Chriſt: hence a goſpel day is called the *day of the Son of man.* And Chriſt, in the goſpel-diſpenſation, ſays, *Lo, I come!* He comes riding in the goſpel chariot; he comes with out-ſtretched arms, ſaying, *Behold me! behold me!*—And his coming thus is joyful to all his people, Romans x. 15. *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace; that bring glad tidings of good things!* His coming in the word is joyful to them, in ſo much, that nothing in the world is ſo precious to them as the word; it is *ſweeter than honey and the honey comb. Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart:* this is their food; *Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* This is their *comfort in their affliction.*——His word quickens them; they hear his voice therein, and ſay, *It is the voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh! leaping on the mountains, ſkipping on the hills.* But his coming in the word is joyful

joyful and beneficial, as it is attended with what follows, namely, his coming in the *Spirit:* for,

4. His coming in the *Spirit* is a joyful coming; and this is that which makes all the former ways of his coming to be joyful. We have no joyful view of his coming in the flesh, nor joyful hope of his coming in the clouds, nor joyful apprehension of his coming in the word, unless we have some share of his coming in the Spirit, as a Spirit of faith and consolation: his coming in the Spirit not only to court, but to win the heart; not only to deal, but to prevail with sinners, by his convincing and converting power.—This coming is joyful to him; for, it is a day of the gladness of his heart; Song iii. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, in the day of the gladness of his heart:* for then he *sees the travel of his soul and is satisfied*, Isa. liii. 11. And, O this should encourage us to pray for the Spirit, the promised Comforter, since nothing gladens the heart of Christ more than the giving of the Spirit to *convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment*, and so to comfort his people.—And, on the other hand, this coming of Christ in the Spirit, cannot but be a joyful coming to his people; for then they are *anointed with the oil of gladness*, and get the oil of *joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.* Then they get their bands loosed; their maladies healed; their doubts resolved; their fears dispelled, *&c.* When Christ says here, *Lo, I come!* let us view therein the promise of his coming in the Spirit: for, why did he come in the flesh, but that he might come in the Spirit? Having come in the flesh, and finished his work, according to his word; he promises the Spirit, and sends the Spirit; *He shall glorify me*, John xvi. 14. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, he shall testify of me*, John xv. 26. His coming in the flesh was the great Old-Testament promise; and his coming in the Spirit the great New-Testament promise: and as the Old-Testament was but a porch to the New; so his coming in

in the flesh was to pave the way for his coming in the Spirit; therefore, when you hear him say, *Lo, I come!* take up the meaning of it not only to be, *Lo, I come in the flesh;* but also, *Lo, I come in the Spirit.* And, O Sirs, is this his voice! What say you to it? Is there any joyful echo in your heart welcoming him; saying, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Surely if he comes in the Spirit to you, at this occasion, it will be a joyful coming.——I might here speak of his coming in his *providence;* his coming at *death;* his coming first to begin, and his after coming to advance his work; but his joyful comings are only *so* by his coming in the Spirit. I go on,

II. To the next thing proposed, which was to show, what makes his coming *joyful* to HIM. And what makes him come with a joyful, *Lo, I come!* Why,

1. He *rejoiced from eternity in the thoughts* of his coming; and therefore cannot but rejoice in the accomplishment of his word and design, Prov. viii. 23, 31. *Ere ever the earth was, he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* It was in the council of peace, he said to his Father, *Lo, I come! I delight to do thy will;* and in the fulness of time he says in our hearing, *Lo, I come!* O to give a joyful welcome to that joyful *Lo!*

2. His coming is joyful to *him;* because he comes clothed with a commission from his Father; and he rejoices to run his errands. It is his Father's will that he executes when he comes; and therefore he says, *I delight to do thy will, O my God. This commandment have I received of my Father, to lay down my life for my sheep.* And therefore, with *desire he desired this passover,* even to be himself *our passover sacrificed for us.* He hath a commission to come; for he is the sent and the sealed of God; *God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Him hath God the Father sealed.* He comes in his Father's name, and his Father's seal appended to his commission.

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3. His coming is joyful to *him*, becauſe it is on a *glorious deſign* of glorifying the Father; and therefore, when he comes he ſays, *Now is my Father glorified; now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him*, John xiii. 31. When he came, and was juſt ready to lay down his life, and having done his work he ſaid, John xvii. 4. *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do.* He brought in glory and honour to all the perfections of God, and full reparation to all his injured attributes.

4. His coming is joyful to *him*, becauſe, as his coming was on a glorious deſign, with reference to his Father, God being glorified by his coming, whether in the fleſh, or by the Spirit; ſo it is on a *loving deſign* toward his people, to whom he comes. He comes to ſave them, and juſtify them, and ſanctify them, and comfort them, and heal them, and help them; and all for love, becauſe he has *loved with an everlaſting love*, therefore he comes to draw with loving-kindneſs.—Love makes him come joyfully: it was love made him come joyfully in the fleſh, and love makes him come joyfully in the Spirit; love made him come at firſt, and, notwithſtanding many provocations, love makes him come again, according to his word, *I will ſee you again*, John xvi. 22. *Now you have ſorrow, but I will ſee you again, and your hearts ſhall rejoice. O the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his love!* He comes joyfully, becauſe he lives cordially.——But I go on,

III. To the next thing propoſed, namely, what makes his coming joyful to his people, what makes them welcome him with a joyful *behold*, BEHOLD *he cometh!* Why,

1. Becauſe his coming is their *life;* when he came in the fleſh, *He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly*, John x. 10. And when he comes in the Spirit, he comes to give life, to give the *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. Whenever he comes, life enters the dead and dry bones. We

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are like dead carcaſes, our ſpirits ſinking within us; but whenever the Spirit of life comes in the word, then we get up, as it were, to our feet; then we have life; *He that hath the Son, hath life:* whenever he comes, and that we have him with us, then the life of faith, the life of repentance, the life of love, the life of joy, the life of humility, the life of holineſs, and the life of comfort come: we live or die as he comes or goes. If life be ſweet, then his coming muſt be ſweet; and of all lives the life of God, a *ſpiritual life, hid with Chriſt in God*, is the moſt pleaſant and glorious.

2. His coming muſt be joyful to them, becauſe his *abſence* is their *death;* yea, his abſence is a *hell* to them that know what a heaven his preſence makes: hence their many *Ohs* when he is away; *Oh! when will thou come unto me? Oh! that it were with me as in months paſt!* and hence their many *how longs*, when he is away; How LONG *wilt thou forget me, O Lord?* How LONG *wilt thou hide thy face from me?* Pſal. xiii. 1, 2. They cannot live without him; or, if his abſence be to ſuch a degree, as that they are careleſs, ſtupid, and unconcerned, yet they that know what his joyful preſence is, will grant, that their careleſs times are their ſad and ſighing times; they are not their joyful times; they are not their life, but their death, and they never expect to have a joyful life till he come again.

When he is away from the church, then all goes to confuſion: *The ſervants of the houſe begin to ſmite their fellow ſervants*, Matth. xxiv. 46. Why, becauſe the Lord delays his coming: they begin to ſmite them with ſentences of *ſuſpenſion*, or *ſecluſion*, as at this day * when he is away, then the ſhepherds begin to *rule his people with force and violence*, Ezek. xxxiv. 4. And what is the effect of that? See ver. 6. *My ſheep wandered over all the mountains; my flock was ſcattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did ſearch, or ſeek after them.* Why, might not this ſmite the hearts of rigid rulers, to ſee the flock ſcattered here and there,

* A ſhort account of what is here alluded to, may be ſeen, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXIV. See likewiſe Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII.

upon the violent obtrusions of hirelings upon them †? No none did search out, or seek after them. They even slight them as an ignorant mob, a rabble, that need not to be regarded, [and, indeed, if matters go on at this rate, if God do not stir up the ensuing Assembly, (*viz.* 1734.) to take course with these disorders, the ruin of the church of Scotland is but beginning.] But whence are all these confusions? May we not say, as it is, Deut. xxxi. 17. *Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us?* When he is away from a church, nothing but confusion and disorders take place; but when he comes back, then his work is revived, Zion is built up, reformation restored. When he goes away from a particular believer, Oh! what a hell of confusion till he returns! His presence gives rest, but his absence trouble; *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

3. His coming is joyful to *them*, because the *errand* on which he came is *merciful*, What does he bring when he comes? Why, he even brings *God* with him, and all the *fulness* of God: and so he brings the chief good with him.——God is in Christ, and all the fulness of the God-head in him; and therefore, when he comes, all good comes: when he comes graciously, he comes in the capacity of a friend, to help; a physician, to heal; a shepherd, to feed; *He feedeth among the lilies.* When he comes, his presence is a reviving and refreshing presence; an enlightening, inlivening, and enlarging presence; sometimes a confirming and comforting presence; a humbling and a sweetly-debasing presence; yea, it is an exalting and dignifying presence. The effects of his coming are most joyful; for, when he comes to his people, then their sins are pardoned, their wants supplied, their enemies conquered, their crosses sanctified, their kingdom secured; and therefore his coming must be joyful to them.

4. His coming is joyful to *them*, because his coming is all their *heaven upon earth;* yea, his presence is the heaven of heavens. What is heaven, but a being *like*

† That the Lord's heritage was grievously oppressed at this time, may be seen laid open, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXV. in some foot notes.

him,

him, by seeing him as he is. Now, this heaven is begun on earth when he comes; for then they *behold his glory, and are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. How can they be but joyful at his coming when they consider *who he is:* he is enough to make a heaven whatever way they look to him: if they look to him *absolutely, He is altogether lovely; the brightness of his Father's glory.* When they look to him *comparatively, He is fairer than the sons of men; more glorious than all the mountains of prey.* When they look to him *relatively*, he is their Head and Husband; their God and Guide; their righteousness and strength; their light, life, joy, and all. O says the *strong* believer, *My beloved is mine, and I am his:* he is mine, and I will not part with him for the whole creation. O says the *weak* believer, the *doubting* believer, O if he were mine, I would not part with him for a thousand worlds. In a word, he is such a heaven to them that nothing can make up the loss of his presence: ministers cannot do it; ordinances cannot do it; angels cannot do it. Ordinances are but the shell, without the kernel, when Christ is not in them; all creature-comforts cannot supply his room. Naturalists say, The loadstone cannot draw in presence of the diamond; surely, when Christ is present with a soul, all the pomp and pride, all the gallantry of the world, will have no influence on the soul. Offer the believer mountains of gold and silver instead of Christ, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, will be his answer: *Thy money perish with thee*, that lays it in balance with the Son of God. Offer me something better than Christ, then you will see what I will do.—There are so many thousand excellencies in Christ, that might be so many thousand reasons why his coming is joyful, that they cannot but say upon the notice of it, *Behold, he cometh!*

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed was, What *expressions* of joy in the Lord Jesus is imported in this, *Lo, I come!* What sort of joy does it express.

1. I think this, *Lo, I come!* expresses *present* joy; *Lo, I come!* It is something like that of John xiii. 32.

Now is the Son of man glorified: there was a time when he said, *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?* John xii. 27. But when he comes graciously, he says upon the matter, Now is my soul satisfied, now is my heart glad; the *Lo*, is in the present time, and *I come*, is in the present tense; *Lo, I come!* And if Christ be presently saying with reference to any company here, *Lo, I come to you!* O it is a present joy to him; he comes rejoicing; he comes leaping and skipping; his *set time of coming* is the time of the *gladness of his heart*.

2. It expresses *active* joy; *Lo, I come!* He rejoices to do good: it is his joy to do service to his Father and his friends. And if he rejoiced in his work when he came to save by the price of his blood; how must he rejoice when he comes to save by the power of his Spirit? The natural sun is said to *rejoice as a strong man to run his race*, Psal. xix. 5. It is a metaphorical speech, for the sun is not capable of joy; but, without metaphor, it is true of the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ; he is a *strong man*, the *man of God's right-hand*, whom he hath *made strong for himself:* and he rejoices to run his race; he rejoices to arise with healing under his wings; *Lo, I come!*—It is an active joy.

3. It expresses *certain* joy. The *Lo*, is a note of certainty; the thing is certain and true; *Lo, I come!* And his joy is certain; certain, true, solid joy. There is nothing more certain than that believers have sometimes *joy unspeakable;* but these are only streams that flow from the joy that is in Christ's heart. His joy is the fountain of their joy; *He is anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows;* and the fellowship they have with him is by some drops of that oil of joy. Can they be certain of the streams and the drops when these are allowed? How much more is it certain, that all true joy centres in him. Believers have sometimes a *fulness of joy;* but their fulness is the fulness of the streams, or of the vessel; but his fulness is the fulness of the ocean. If it be certain, there is a stream of joy in the believer sometimes, much more that there is the spring of joy in Christ.

4. It

4. It expreſſes *communicative* joy; deſigning his people ſhould ſhare of his joy, *Lo, I come!* The joy that Chriſt has, as Mediator, is a fulneſs of joy, deſigned for his peoples uſe, that *out of his fulneſs we may receive, and grace for grace*, and joy for joy; grace anſwering grace in Jeſus; and joy anſwering joy in him. Yea, Chriſt, as Mediator, is anointed with the *oil of joy*, the *Spirit above meaſure*, that he may communicate this joy, and give to them the *oil of joy for mourning*, Iſa. lxi. 3. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek? to comfort all that mourn; to give them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the Spirit of heavineſs.* Chriſt has a commiſſion from his Father to communicate his joy; and therefore it muſt be communicative.

5. It expreſſes *triumphant* joy, *conquering* joy; *Lo, I come!* And nothing ſhall hinder my coming, nor ſtop me in my courſe. Mountains nor hills cannot hinder the ſun riſing; this points out his coming as a conqueror, notwithſtanding principalities and powers in his way, he can eaſily throw them down; *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave*, Iſa. lxiii. 1. Behold it is I: *Lo, I come!*

6. It expreſſes *ſolemn* joy. He comes with a ſolemnity, *Lo, I come!* according to the council of a glorious Trinity. Now when the purpoſe of heaven is come to the birth, and the decree breaks forth, and the fulneſs of time is come, he takes heaven and earth witneſs, as it were, to his ſolemn march on the errand: he ſays it with a loud *Lo*, that all the world of men and angels may notice, *Lo, I come!* And, indeed, all the elect angels break forth into joyful ſongs of praiſe at this ſolemnity: when he came in the fleſh, they ſang, *Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, and good-will towards men.* And when he comes in the Spirit to convert a ſoul, there is joy in heaven over the ſoul that repents.—It is ſolemn joy.

7. It

7. It expreſſes *infinite* joy. If we conſider who the perſon is that ſpeaks, namely, GOD, aſſuming our nature in the perſon of his eternal Son. The joy of an infinite God, muſt be infinite joy. Finite creatures cannot tell what infinite joy is; nay, the joy of ſaints is *joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; what then muſt be the joy of the King of ſaints? It is infinitely above ſpeech and expreſſion, infinitely glorious. The joy of ſaints is unſpeakably great; the joy of the man Chriſt, of the human nature, is unſpeakably greater; but the joy of God, of God in our nature, is infinitely great above all finite apprehenſion.——Finite thoughts are loſt in this infinite depth.

8. It expreſſes *everlaſting* joy, and *eternal* joy; joy from everlaſting, before time; and to everlaſting, after time. It is true, the *Lo, I come!* as I ſaid firſt, imports *preſent* joy, with reſpect to our view of it, but with reſpect to God, nothing being paſt or future, but all things eternally preſent to him, this *Lo* expreſſes the *everlaſting* joy he had, and will have for ever in this work now tranſacted in time. It is ſaid, Pſal. civ. 31. *The glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever. The Lord ſhall rejoice in his work; the Lord Jehovah ſhall rejoice in all his works together*, (as we have it in the metre.) Why? his glory is everlaſting glory, his joy everlaſting joy in all his works; eſpecially in that work wherein all his glory ſhines moſt brightly, his ſaving work, of which he is here ſpeaking, when he ſays, *Lo, I come!*—Thus you ſee what ſort of joy is expreſſed in this, *Lo, I come!*

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, What expreſſions of joy is imported in the *echo* from the church, *The voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh!* What ſort of joy does this expreſs?

1. It expreſſes joy with *ſurpriſe*. O but his coming fills the believer with a ſweet ſurpriſe, like that, *Or ever I was aware*, Song vi. 12. How abruptly does the church here ſpeak, like one ſuddenly raviſhed! *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

2. It

2. It expreſſes joy with *wonder* and *admiration: Behold, he cometh!* Wonder, O heavens and earth, that he ſhould come to the like of me! And wonder that he ſhould come back again, after I have heaped up mountains and hills of provocation in his way. *Is this the manner of man, O Lord? and what can David ſay more?* What can I ſay, but ſit down and wonder!

3. It expreſſes joy with *faith; Behold he cometh!* The eye of faith firſt ſees him coming, and then the tongue of joy, ſings, *Behold, he cometh!* Faith cometh by hearing; what? even the voice of Chriſt, the joyful ſound of the goſpel. Chriſt rides in that chariot; and the believer, by faith, hearing the noiſe of his chariot wheels; yea, the ſweet voice of him that rides in the chariot, who has grace poured into his lips then he cries out, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

4. It expreſſes joy with *love.* And, indeed, as faith is the head, ſo love is the heart of the new creature: and the joy here is a loving joy; for it is in the view of Chriſt as her Beloved, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* He is the beloved of the Father, who ſays, *This is my beloved Son;* and the true believer is of the Father's mind, ſaying, *This is my Beloved, this is my friend, O daughters of Jeruſalem.* And what but joyful love, makes her here ſpeak, with her heart at her mouth, *The voice of my Beloved!*

5. It expreſſes joy with *praiſe* and *adoration* (as well as wonder and admiration;) *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* O bleſſed be the comer, as it is, Pſalm cxviii. 26. *Bleſſed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.* It is a *behold* of adoration, as well as admiration; and, indeed, they both go together, an admiring heart, is an adoring heart: as the preſence of Chriſt, makes a heaven in the heart; ſo it ſtirs up the heart inſtantly to the work of heaven, which is to ſing his praiſe, and to glorify his name, ſaying, O glory, glory, glory, to him for coming to the like of me, that was afraid he would never give me a viſit. O! let all the world praiſe him with me; *Behold he cometh!*

6. It

6. It expreſſes joy with *humility ; Behold, he cometh !* and cometh even *to me : What am I, and what is my father's houſe?* Behold he cometh to me ! I had no power to come to him, no heart to come, and I would have remained for ever at a diſtance from him, if he had not graciouſly condeſcended to come unto me : I could do nothing but depart from him by an evil heart of unbelief ; but he comes ; *His own arm bringeth ſalvation :* and he comes with all the ſalvation I need. Self is ſunk to nothing at the appearance of this glorious HE ; *Behold,* HE *cometh !*

7. It expreſſes joy with *contempt of the world : Behold, he cometh !* and his appearing darkens all the glory of the world, and makes it diſappear, as the ſtars at the riſing of the ſun. *I count all but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him.* O how little does the believer think of the world, when Chriſt comes ! (πάντα ζημίαν πάντα σκύβαλα,) all is *dung and dog's meat,* as the apoſtle phraſes it, Phillipians iii. 8. ; earthly crowns, kingdoms, thrones, and ſceptres are but little deſpicable toys. Here, here, is an object worth the beholding ; let mine eyes be for ever turned away from beholding vanities : *Behold, he cometh !*

8. It expreſſes joy with *deſire* that others may ſee and behold him ; *Behold, he cometh !* O that all the world would come and ſee what I ſee, come and enjoy what I enjoy ! They that ſee the glory of Chriſt, though they ſlight a world of vanities, yet they pity a world of periſhing ſinners, and would gladly be inſtrumental in bringing others to Chriſt ; *Come,* SEE A MAN *that told me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Chriſt ?* ſaid the woman of Samaria. Thus David, *Reſtore to me the joy of thy ſalvation ; then will I teach tranſgreſſors thy way, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.*

In a word, this *Behold, he cometh !* expreſſes joy with all the *qualities of heavenly and ſpiritual joy.*—It expreſſes *unſpeakable* joy, as appears by her broken ſpeech, *The voice of my Beloved* !—It expreſſes *glorious* joy ; for it flows, from a view of his glory, *Behold, he cometh* !—It expreſſes *holy* joy ; for ſhe rejoices to ſee him come

come ſkipping and leaping upon the mountains and hills of ſin and guilt, and levelling all the high towers of ſtrong corruption in his way. O how glad to ſee him coming down, and making the mountains to melt before him! So it is a holy joy: the very oppoſite of all carnal and ſenſual joys.—It expreſſes a *quickening* and *ſtrengthening* joy; for now her heart is open, her lips are open, whatever indiſpoſition for duty took place before; now *the joy of the Lord is her ſtrength.*—Again, it expreſſes a *ſolid* and *well-grounded* joy; it is no fancy, no deluſion, nor enthuſiaſm; no: the word and Spirit both concur to this joy. *The voice of my Beloved!* there is the word: *Behold, he cometh!* there is the Spirit. Words cannot give the believer joy without the Spirit; and the Spirit will not without the word; the joy of the Holy Ghoſt is ſtill grounded upon, or agreeable to the word.—Finally, it expreſſes a *welcoming* joy; *Behold, he cometh! Lo, I come*, ſays Chriſt; *Behold, he cometh!* ſays the church: *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly*: come and welcome with a thouſand good-wills. O may he be a welcome gueſt here!

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed was, To ſhow *whence* is this *combination* and *conjunction* of joys: Or, why is it, that like a reſounding echo, his *Lo, I come*! is anſwered with a *behold, he cometh*! Whence is this? Why,

1. It proceeds from the *mutual* RELATION *between him and his people,* between him and his church: he is the Bridegroom, and ſhe is the bride; he is the Huſband, and ſhe is the ſpouſe. He has commauded other huſbands to *leave father and mother, and to cleave to his wife;* and he has done ſomething like that himſelf: he that ſaid, *Thy Maker is thy Huſband*, left his Father's boſom for the ſake of his bride, ſaying, *Lo, I come*! and the conjugal tye being mutual, the believer having the Spirit of his glorious Huſband, whenever he hears the voice of an approaching Jeſus, is obliged to ſay, *The voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh!*

2. It proceeds from the *mutual* SYMPATHY *between him and them:* hence, what affects him, does affect them; what touches them, touches him; *He that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye*, says Christ: they stand kindly affected also to him. This mutual sympathy and love, flows from the *union* between Christ and them. He is the Head and they are the members of his body; and both Head and members being animated by one and the same Spirit, his joy must be their joy. When they come to have his glorious presence in heaven, they are said to *enter into the joy of their Lord:* and when they have his gracious presence on earth signified to them with a joyful *Lo, I come!* they have some begun entrance into his joy; that makes them say with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

3. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* ONENESS *of* NATURE *between him and them.* As he is a partaker of their human nature; so they are *partakers of his divine nature*, 2 Peter i. 4. Hence, as he knows their frame, and what sort of a voice is most suited to their capacity, and accordingly speaks to them by the whispering of his Spirit in the word; so they *know his voice from the voice of a stranger*, John x. 5. They know the sound of his feet upon the mountains.

4. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* AGREEMENT *in* DESIGN *between him and them.* His ultimate end and design is the glory of God in their salvation; their ultimate end is the same, even that God may be glorified in their salvation. Now, when he comes to pursue this design so joyfully, they cannot but welcome him joyfully: *Sing, O heavens; and shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel*, Isaiah xliv. 25.

5. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* INTERCOURSE *between him and them at meeting:* he hath always some good news to bring them from the Father, which he is glad to tell

tell them, and they are glad to hear; and they, on the other hand, have ſomething to tell him which they cannot tell the world. And as they are glad of his coming to have an opportunity to tell him their mind; ſo he is glad to hear them; *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, in the ſecret places of the ſtairs, let me hear thy voice, and thy countenance; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*, Song ii. 14. He has ſomething to do with them, and they have ſomething ado with him; and therefore, when he joyfully draws near to them, they joyfully draw near to him; and viſit each other with endearing embraces. Truly, indeed, his viſits are always viſits of kindneſs, and theirs are ordinarily of buſineſs; his buſineſs is to give, and their buſineſs is to get; but then the viſits are moſt ſweet, when they are viſits of love on both ſides.

6. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, becauſe of the *mutual* INTEREST *and* CONCERN *they have both in the covenant of promiſe*, which is a fountain of joy, and belongs primarily to Chriſt, in whom the covenant ſtands faſt, and in whom all the promiſes are, *Yea*, and *Amen;* and ſecondarily to believers in him, who are all *the children of the promiſe*. It is promiſed to Chriſt, that *he ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied*, Iſaiah liii. 11. And it is promiſed to the believer, clothed with the character of a meek perſon, that he *ſhall eat, and ſhall be ſatisfied*, Pſalm xxii. 26. Now, when Chriſt comes graciouſly to his people, both he and they muſt be ſatisfied; for he comes to accompliſh the promiſe made to himſelf and to them. Hence mutual ſatisfaction cannot but take place.

In a word, his joy is the fountain of theirs; their joy ariſes from the powerful influence of his joyful approach, upon their joyful reception of him; his joyful, *Lo, I come!* does inſtantly create their joyful, *Lo, he cometh!* he having put an echoing principle within them.——The joyful ſound of his, *Lo, I come!* cannot but meet with a joyful reſounding and rebounding of their, *Lo, he cometh!*

VII. The *seventh* thing propoſed, was, To make ſome *application* of the ſubject, by deducing ſome *inferences*.

1. Is it ſo as it has been ſaid, *That Chriſt's coming to his people graciouſly, in their time of need, is a joyful and delectable coming, both to him and them*, then we may ſee, what it is would make a *ſweet communion-day* among us, amidſt theſe *ſad* and *lowring days* wherein we live. We live in ſinful and ſorrowful days; but Chriſt's joyful approach, with a *Lo, I come!* would make a joyful day among us at this occaſion: and, O that he would ſpeak powerfully, that many here may be made to ſay, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* He can make the goſpel-trumpet to convey his voice. Indeed, if the devil, and his inſtruments, could get their will, you would not enjoy a goſpel-miniſtry; and if our rowers, that have brought the church of Scotland into deep waters, had got their will, this and ſome others would have been vacant congregations*; there would have been no communion ſolemnities here: when men would have ſhut the goſpel-door, O may God himſelf come and open the door, and open the mouth of miniſters, and make his voice to be heard; his joyful, *Lo, I come!* I come to give you a little reviving in your bondage; when men are moſt unkind, I come to ſhow my kindneſs; as it is ſaid, Dan. ix. 25. *The wall ſhall be built in perilous times.* The times we live in are perilous times, in reſpect of ſin, error, apoſtaſy, and defection from Reformation-purity and principles; a time wherein the rights and privileges of poor people are injured, the office of the miniſtry retrenched, faithful miniſters ejected, and the power of preſbytery invaded; a time of confuſion in church and ſtate, at home and abroad ‡; a time wherein God's

* Alluding to the ſentences paſſed upon the four brethren, formerly narrated, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXIV. in ſome foot notes.

‡ The juſtneſs of the charge here exhibited, and a ſhort account of the facts here alluded to, may be attained, by conſulting what has been formerly narrated, Vol. II. pag. 304, 305, 466. Vol. IV. page 148. Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXIV, LXXXV. in the notes at the foot.

wrath

wrath is threatened to be poured out: theſe are indeed perilous times; but hath the Lord ſaid, *The wall ſhall be built up in perilous times?* O may this perilous time be a building time; according to the word, *When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory.* Let us ſeek a glorious appearance of the Lord at this occaſion: and what do we know but he is ſaying, even with reference to this very time, *Lo, I come!*— O may we hear his voice, and ſay with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

2. Hence ſee the *ſweetneſs of fellowſhip with God in Chriſt:* why, it is a partaking of his joy and happineſs, his glory and triumph; it is a meeting his joyful, *Lo, I come*! with our joyful, *Behold, he cometh*! Happy are the ſheep of Chriſt, who know his voice! And, Oh! how miſerable are you who hear, and yet do not know the joyful ſound! What makes the word and ordinances ſweet to the believer? Why, it is their hearing his voice therein; his joyful voice, therein; his joyful voice, that gives them a joyful heart.——But, what makes theſe ſame ordinances ſuch a burden and wearineſs to you, poor graceleſs man? Why, you have never heard the voice of Chriſt, his loving voice, his majeſtic voice, his powerful voice, that goes out through, and in through the heart, and penetrates and ranſacks the ſecret receſſes of the ſoul. What makes believers lament the abſence of Chriſt? Why, then their joy is removed; they are always either rejoicing in his preſence, or lamenting his abſence, except when they fall into a nap of ſecurity, till his joyful voice awake them again. But, alas! what makes you, poor Chriſtleſs ſinners, live an unconcerned life, though Chriſt ſhould be never ſo long away? Why, you are not acquainted with his coming and going, nor with the ſweetneſs of communion with him. But, O poor ſoul, may it not ſtir you up to ſeek after acquaintance with him; to hear that the believer's joyful communion is no leſs than a partaking of the *joy of his Lord.* Chriſt's joy is their joy, though not of the ſame *meaſure:* for Chriſt is *anointed with the oil of joy and gladneſs above his fellows;* yet it is of the ſame *quality;* for they have

have fellowſhip with him in his joy, whenever he comes to them.

3. Hence ſee the difference between the *law* and the *goſpel;* or between the voice of God in the law, and the voice of God in the goſpel: his voice in the law is a terrible and dreadful voice; for therein he comes in wrath, with threatenings and curſes in his mouth: but the voice of Chriſt in the goſpel is a charming voice, a joyful ſound of ſalvation to ſinners, and a door of hope. Whatever word tends to work deſpair, and to leave a man hopeleſs, is the voice of the law; but the goſpel ſhows the door of hope in the valley of Achor, and that with a pleaſant ſound of grace, mercy, pardon, and pity: *Lo, I come!* Hence, as the law is never preached to good purpoſe, except in a ſubſerviency to the goſpel; ſo goſpel-believers are theſe who firſt have believed the law, or heard God's voice in the law, which hath made them deſpair of all help in themſelves, and their own righteouſneſs and duty: and next, they have believed the goſpel, or heard Chriſt's voice therein, which has brought them to a lively hope, yea, to *joy and peace in believing.*

4. Hence ſee both the *nature* of *faith* and of *unbelief.*—On the one hand, we may, from this doctrine, ſee the nature of *faith*, in its correſpondency with its objects; both its immediate object, the word; and its principal object, Chriſt, the ſpeaker, whoſe voice ſounds in our ears by this goſpel. The word ſays, *Behold, he cometh!* and faith ſays, *Behold, he cometh!* Chriſt ſays, *Behold! Lo, I come!* and faith ſays, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* The goſpel is nothing elſe but a proclamation of Chriſt's coming; his coming to give life, his coming to ſave ſinners by the price of his blood, and the power of his Spirit; and faith is a ſetting the ſeal to a preſent *lo*, with a preſent *behold.* The firſt act of faith looks neither *backward* to what is anterior or paſt, ſuch as the decree of God, or the deſign of Chriſt, his intention in dying; nor does it look *forward* to poſterior things, as if it believed a ſtate of ſalvation that is to come; but it looks to a *preſent* truth, a preſent ſaying, as the goſpel is called,

a *faith-*

a *faithful saying*, and so a present *lo; Lo, I come!* and offer myself to you, man, to you, woman; *Lo, I come!* and bring salvation with me. Faith, under the influence of the Spirit, says, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* I hear the voice of God speaking to me through such a minister, and inviting me the chief of sinners. And I joyfully welcome a coming with salvation unto me: there is a perswasion and appropriation in it to the man's self; and according to the measure of this particular application to itself, such is the measure of joy. There would be no joy at all, if the soul should put away the message from himself; but receiving it to himself, he rejoices in the voice of Christ as his Beloved.—But next, it shows us also the nature of *unbelief*, on the other hand; the evil heart of unbelief contradicts the word of Christ; Christ says, *Lo, I come!* Unbelief says, O he will not come; no, no: he will never come to the like of me. Indeed a believer may say, and hath good reason to say, I fear my sins provoke him to stay away; and it will be a wonder if he come to the like of me. But it is gross unbelief to say he will not come; I do not expect so much good at his hand: and hence unbelief is said to make *God a liar:* it contradicts and blasphemes. O to get faith this day, to welcome Jesus saying, *Lo, I come!* and to expect good at his hand.

I might next apply it for *trial* and *examination.*—What know you of this joyful coming of the Son of God? It is this coming of the Lord Jesus that only can make your coming to a communion-table profitable and warrantable: if you know nothing of his joyful approach graciously to you, you cannot approach with his allowance to his table; for, if he never came to you, by his Spirit, you never came to him by faith; and so you are an unbeliever: and if you remain in this case, you never had a right to his table here, nor shall have a share of his table above.

QUEST. *How shall I know, if ever he came thus to me?* For helping you in this important inquiry, I would ask you these few things following.

1. Have

1. Have you ever apprehended the *diſtance* between Chriſt and you? Was you ever made ſenſible of the dreadful diſtance between him and you; a diſmal diſtance; a damnable diſtance; and invincible and inſuperable diſtance? Have you ſeen an utter impoſſibility of ſaving yourſelf from it, unleſs the Lord had come to you? This is the Lord's ordinary way: when he brings to light, he makes ſenſible of darkneſs; when he brings to life, he makes ſenſible of deadneſs and lifeleſneſs; when he brings to faith, he makes ſenſible of unbelief; when he brings to love, he makes ſenſible of enmity; when he brings to holineſs, he makes ſenſible of wickedneſs; and when he brings to acquaintance, he makes ſenſible of eſtrangement: and before he comes near, he makes ſenſible of diſtance.

2. Have you heard his voice ſaying, *Lo, I come!* Have you heard, not the voice of miniſters only, but the voice of the chief Shepherd? and know it to be his voice, by the majeſty of it, by the power that attended it, by the ſweetneſs that was in it? Has the goſpel come to you not in *word only, but in power?* 1 Theſſ. i. 5. Was there ſuch light, life, liberty, and joy accompanying the voice, as made you ſure, at the time, that it was not the voice of man, but of God, who ſpake like himſelf?

3. Have you ſeen him coming, and apprehended him by the *light of the Spirit*, revealing the *Son in you?* Have you ſeen the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt? Have you ſeen his fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and ſweetneſs; his glory, worth, and excellency, by a light ſhining not in to the head only, but the heart?—It is a ſpiritual light, *fleſh and blood cannot reveal it;* education, and external revelation, however ſubſervient it may be, yet cannot contribute unto it, without ſupernatural revelation.

4. Have you joyfully welcomed a *coming Jeſus?* ſaying, in effect, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Have you apprehended the mountains that were in the way between him and you; particularly the mountains of ſin and guilt? Has this accented

your

your joy, that he came over all the mountains, and melted down the mountains, and made your heart to melt down before him alſo, becauſe of your heaping up ſuch mountains between him and you.

5. What *intercourſe* have you had with him? what *mutual embracement?* Did you get him in your arms, and wreſtle with him for the bleſſing? Did you get grace to call him your *Beloved;* and to ly in his boſom, and melt in tears of joy? I know there may be intercourſe and fellowſhip with him, even where this is not the attainment; but ſomething like this ordinarily takes place, when he and his people meet together, after ſome black interveening clouds have kept them long aſunder; when his joyful *Lo*, meets with that joyful ſalutation, *Behold, he cometh! it is the voice of my Beloved!*

6. What are the *fruits* and *effects* of his coming? *Beholding his glory*, was you *changed?* Surely, if there was never a change wrought upon you, but that you remain as vain, frothy, and carnal in your converſation and deportment as ever, he has not come to you. But has his coming imbittered ſin, and made you differ with yourſelf, and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs for your juſtification, and to his holineſs for your ſanctification? His great errand is like his name, JESUS, to *ſave his people from their ſins;* from the *guilt of ſin*, by his merit and righteouſneſs; and from the *power* of ſin, by his ſpirit and grace. What joy has his coming raiſed in you? Surely, the joy of his ſalvation, as it is a ſin-killing joy, ſo it is a ſoul-ſtrengthening joy; *The joy of the Lord is their ſtrength*, Neh. viii. 10. Did this joy ſtrengthen you to believe? and ſtrengthen you to pray? and ſtrengthen you to hope? and ſtrengthen you to wait upon him? and ſtrengthen you to ſerve him? and to run the way of his commandments with enlargement of heart?

QUEST. *Are there any ſigns of his coming? What are the prognoſticates of his coming?*

ANSW. (1.) It would be a token of his coming, if we were ſenſible of, and afflicted for his *abſence*, ſaying, *O that I knew where I might find him!* a longing deſire

after him, saying, *O! when wilt thou come? He will satisfy the longing desire.*

(2.) Another sign of his coming is, if we were *seeking* after him, and *wrestling* with him for the blessing; he is near to them that call upon him; and these who seek him shall find him.

(3.) If we were *waiting* for him in his appointed way; for, they who wait upon him, shall have to say, *This is our God*, Isaiah xxv. 9.

(4.) If we were finding ourselves to have a *name* to which the promise opens a door of hope. Is there any hope of his coming for a poor *insolvent bankrupt*, who fears that the word of the Lord is against him? Why, that man is in the promise; *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit*, Isaiah lxvi. 2.——Is there any hope of his coming to a poor *needy creature*, who can find no relief to its soul? Yes, that case is in the promise; *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Jacob will regard.*

We shall now shut up the whole discourse with a word by way of *exhortation*. Is Christ saying, *Lo, I come?* O Sirs, hear and believe, so as you may cry out joyfully, *The voice of my Beloved! Behold, he cometh!* For motives,

1. Consider who it is that *speaketh;* it is God in our nature, IMMANUEL, *God with us*. The *word of salvation* is to you sinners, as well as to you saints; his voice is *Lo, I come* to save sinners; *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance:* yea, *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 4.

2. He says it with a *Lo!* that all the world may give attention to it; *Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken ye people from a far*, Isa. lxix. 1. He is speaking to the isles, particularly to the isle Britain, that has long refused to hear his voice. The gospel is to be preached to *every creature*.

3. The reason why he is saying to you in this gos-gospel, *Lo, I come*, to save sinners, is, that sinners may welcome

welcome him and say, *The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh!* Even the first welcome of faith may be in these terms, and should be so; for, his manifesting himself thus, in the *word*, is the *ground* of faith, tho' his manifesting himself by the *Spirit*, is the *cause* of faith, and absolutely necessary to create that faith.—But, as *faith comes by hearing;* so, hear, O sinner; hear this word as the voice of the Spirit of Christ: *hear what the Spirit says to the churches.* Listen to the word, till you hear and understand that it is the Spirit of Christ; or Christ, by his Spirit, speaking to you, and saying, *Lo, I come* to you.

OBJECT. "Christ speaks not here to me, but to "his Father, saying, *Lo, I come! I delight to do thy* "*will, O my God.*"

ANSW. It is the better for you and me, and the surer ground of faith and hope; for, it is a word to his Father concerning us, and about his coming to save us. It were sure enough, if it were spoken immediately to us; but it is still the surer, that it is said to the Father concerning us: and he will not retract what he hath said to his Father. Therefore,

4. Consider, that his coming in the *Spirit*, to accomplish salvation by power, is as *surely* to take place, as his coming in the *flesh* has already taken place; therefore, when he says, *Lo, I come*, to save by the power of my Spirit! Let faith say, *Behold, he cometh*, to save me!

OBJECT. "But has he purposed to save us *all?* "If not, how can there be ground for us *all* to be-"lieve?"

ANSW. Whom he has purposed to save, is a secret; but whom he calls to believe, and look to him for salvation, is no secret; *Look unto me, and be saved,* ALL *the ends of the earth*, Isa. xlv. 22. And faith, as I said before, is not to look to any secret, either past or to come, but to the word of salvation, to a present *Lo; Lo, I come!* And if you venture on his word, without more questions, we can assure you, from his word, you are safe: take him at his word, when he says, *Lo, I come!*

5. Consider, that *mountains* are no *hinderances;* he comes *skipping on the mountains and leaping on the hills.* There is a mountain of darkness in your mind; a mountain of obstinacy in your wills; a mountain of carnality and earthliness in your affections; mountains of guilt lying on our consciences; and mountains of objections, doubts, and fears, in your hearts; but all these are nothing to him. Therefore, O take his word for it, *Lo, I come!* and say, *Behold, he cometh! skipping on the mountains.* He can come over them all with one leap, with one skip.

6. Consider, that it is his *joyful voice*, both in the Old and New Testament, *Lo, I come!* He was glad to come in the flesh of old, and he is as glad to come in the Spirit now, according to his promise: and, O Sirs, will you not gladly welcome him? O! is he saying so gladly, *Lo, I come?* What are you saying, poor soul? If you cannot say, *The voice of my Beloved!* then, O will you say, It is *the voice of the Father's Beloved*, who has said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*? And if you welcome him, as the Father's Beloved, you are quite safe. If you cannot say, *Behold he cometh* just now; yet, will you say, *He that shall come will come;* and wait upon him in his own way? He waits to be gracious; and *he is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.*—— Again, if you cannot say, *Behold he cometh* to my observation; yet will you say, *Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly?* And thus pray for his coming graciously and mercifully; *Come, Lord Jesus;* come to merciful judgment against all my lusts, and prepare me for thy general judgment. Come in the Spirit. Come in power and great glory at this occasion. O he comes skipping and leaping! Let your heart leap within you at the thoughts of it.

OBJECT. "But I do not feel; I do not see his "coming."

ANSW. *Blessed are they that believe, and have not seen.* If you do not see and feel, yet do you not hear him say, *Lo, I come?* Faith comes by *hearing*, and not by

by *ſeeing:* while you hear his word, you hear his feet upon the mountains: therefore, againſt hope believe in hope, ſaying, *Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief: It is the voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

Well, Sirs, *What think you, will he not come to the feaſt?* Have we no reaſon to think that he will come? Yea, I think we have.—Why, it is a time of *need* among his poor people; and his throne of grace is erected for a time of need: therefore we are called to *come boldly to it, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*—It is a time of *trouble* and *diſtreſs*, and he is a *preſent help in time of trouble;* and a *refuge for the oppreſſed.*—It is a time wherein many of his people are in a *wilderneſs of darkneſs and deſpondency;* and he has ſaid, *I will bring her to the wilderneſs, and there will I ſpeak comfortably to her*; or, IN TO HER HEART.—It is a time wherein *many of his people*, from all corners, and, I hope, many praying people, are met about his hand; and he has ſaid, *Where* TWO *or* THREE *are met together, in my name, there will I be in the midſt of them.*—It is a time wherein *ſome of his ſervants*, and *many of his people* are like *outcaſts* in the church, deſpiſed and caſt out by the judicatories; and he hath ſpoken in his word of *gathering the outcaſts of Iſrael*, Zeph. iii. 18. Iſa. lvi. 8. Pſal. cxlvii. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jeruſalem: he gathereth together the outcaſts of Iſrael.*—Why then, ſhall we not expect his coming, when, at the ſame time, he is ſaying, *Lo, I come?*——May faith's joyful echo in our hearts ſay, *The voice of my Beloved! Behold, he cometh!*

SERMON

SERMON XC*.

The *Time* of NEED, a *Time* of LOVE.

EZEKIEL xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.—

MY friends, if you have been believing communicants this day, your Lord has been giving you a *love feaſt*. But now, ſince the table is drawn, and the feaſt ſeems to be over, leſt you reckon his love withdrawn alſo, I am come upon the back of the feaſt, to give you a love-lettter, written with his own hand, and directed to you, that you may lay it up in the cabinet of your hearts, and never either forget nor jealous his love at any time, which he hath ſhown to you at this, or ſome other time of your need. The words of the letter are, *Now, when I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.*

The moſt remarkable event that befel the Jewiſh church of old, as to its outward condition, was the ſhadow of the ſpiritual mercies, deſigned for the true Zion of God; and therefore, I am to ſpeak of the bleſſings whereof this is an emblem: it is a New-teſtament mercy in Old-teſtament dreſs. Under this ſhadow is hid the moſt ſubſtantial ſpiritual bleſſings.

* This Subject was handled in Five Sermons. The firſt was preached on the Sabbath-evening immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Dunfermline, July 14. 1734. The other four were delivered after the ſolemnity.—The ſecond impreſſion.

In

In the words we may obſerve the four following particulars.

1. A *miſerable* time aſcribed to the ſinner, called, *Thy time.*

2. A *merciful* time aſcribed to the Saviour, called, *The time of love.*

3. The *happy conjunction* or *meeting*, between that miſerable time, and this merciful time, *Thy time was a time of love*, and wherein I ſhewed my love.

4. The *ſtrangeneſs* and *wonderfulneſs* of this conjunction, BEHOLD! *thy time was a time of love.* It is matter of aſtoniſhment, and worthy of a note of admiration.

I reſerve the explication of theſe particulars to the proſecution of the following doctrine.

OBSERV. *That it is matter of wonder and admiration, that God ſhould ſhow his love to ſinners, at ſuch a remarkable juncture, that their time of need and miſery, appears to be his time of love and mercy.* BEHOLD, THY TIME WAS A TIME OF LOVE.

The method I would incline to handle this ſubject in, under the divine favour, ſhall be the following.

I. We ſhall ſpeak a little of the SINNER'S *time of need* and *miſery*, as it is deſcribed in the context.

II. Of GOD'S *time of love*, as it is here alſo repreſented and ſhadowed forth.

III. Make it evident, that he ſhows his love at ſuch a *remarkable juncture*, as makes it appear, their *time of need* is his *time of love.*

IV. Show that this is matter of *wonder* and *admiration.*

V. Deduce ſome *inferences* for application of the whole.

I. We are to ſpeak a little of the *time of need* and *miſery*, as here pointed out in the context.

1. The

1. The *time of need* here pointed out is, when we are in a *polluted ſtate;* repreſented by the infant caſt out of the womb; *I ſaw thee polluted in thine own blood, neither waſhed with water, nor ſalted, nor ſwaddled*, ver. 4. When grace and mercy take hold of a ſinner, it is even when living in the puddle and filthy mire of original and actual pollution: the underſtanding polluted with darkneſs, the will with enmity, and the affections with carnality and ſenſuality.

2. The *time of need* is when we are in an *helpleſs, naked*, and *deſtitute* ſtate, having no eye to pity, or have compaſſion upon us; *No eye pitied thee to do any of theſe things unto thee, to have compaſſion upon thee*, ver. 5. Grace and mercy ſtep in with help when we can contribute no help to ourſelves: when all refuge fails, and all help is gone, ſurely it is a time of need.

3. The *time of need*, here mentioned, is when we are in a *loathſome ſtate;* in an unpleaſant ſtate, as new born children wallowing in their blood; *Thou waſt caſt out to the loathing of thy perſon*, ver. 5. Grace then beheld with an eye of love and pity, even when we are loathſome to beholders.

4. The *time of need* is when we are in *extreme hazard*, upon the very brink and precipice of utter ruin, juſt chocked with our own blood, ready to die and expire, being expoſed, and *caſt out to the open fields*, ver. 5. And what was it but a field of blood, a field of danger, a field of death? And what is this time of need, but the time of death, wherein we are dead in ſin, and dead in law: which is plainly ſuppoſed, ver. 6. *I ſaid to thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, Live;* intimating, that the time of need was a time of ſpiritual death, and obnoxious to eternal death, upon the brink of hell and damnation.——This is the time of need here repreſented.

II. The next thing I would touch at alſo, is GOD's *time of love*, as here ſhadowed forth; that extremity is his opportunity; that time of need is the time of his ſhowing his love. And what this time of love is,

may

may appear particularly from these four things in the context.

1. His *time of love* is a time of *love-calls*, wherein he calls to us, *Live ;* ver. 6. *I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood*, LIVE ; *yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live.* These love-calls are doubled, that they may be effectual ; he says it, and repeats it again : and we are never called effectually, till we hear him twice. In the time of love, therefore he says unto us, *Live :* yea, he says to us, *in our blood, Live :* he says it outwardly, in the word, and then he says it inwardly, by the Spirit ; he says it into the ear, and then says it again into the heart ; then the heart that was a dead grave opens, and takes in the living Jesus, the Spirit of life enters, and the dead soul begins to live and breath spiritually. The quickening word creates in the soul a life of care and concern about salvation, *What shall I do to be saved ?* A life of desire, after Christ the Saviour ; O says the poor soul, I would give a thousand worlds for him ? And afterwards, in various degrees, a life of faith, love, hope, and joy.

2. His *time of love* is a time of *love-visits ; When I passed by thee*, says the words here : it is an allusion to passengers, that, on their way, meet with miserable objects in a deplorable condition, and extend pity toward them : *I passed by thee.* It is spoken after the manner of man, but done after the manner of God, who is pleased to give gracious visits to the soul, whom he once quickens by his word of power. It is true all his visits in this world are but like a *passing by :* they are but passing visits, as it is said to Moses, Exod. xxxii. 23. *While my glory passes by, I will show thee my back parts ; for my face shall not be seen.* It is in heaven we see him *face to face*, without interruption : but here we are to be content if we get some view of his glory as it passes by.

3. His *time of love* is a time of *love-glances*, or of *loving looks ; When I passed by thee*, and LOOKED *upon thee.* It is not a look of *observation* only, for he beholds all things ; they are *naked and open before him*, but a look of *commiseration.* It is a look wherein his heart

follows his eye.—In the time of love, the Lord gives his people ſometimes an *appropriating* look, an *affectionate* look; *His countenance beholdeth the upright*, Pſal. xi. 7.—Sometimes a *directing* look, *I will guide thee with mine eye*, Pſal. xxxiii. 8. If he takes his directing eye off us, we never make a right ſtep.—Sometimes a *convincing* look, a *penetrating* look, ſuch as he gave to Peter, that pierced, melted, and diſſolved his heart; *Jeſus looked on him, and he went out and wept bitterly.* —Sometimes a *comforting* look, Iſa. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* With a look he breaks the hard heart; and with a look he heals the broken heart.—Theſe are his love-glances.

4. His *time of love* is a time of *love-tokens:* and here are many tokens of conjugal love in the context; ſome antecedent, ſome concomitant, and ſome conſequent to the marriage.

(1.) Some love-tokens *antecedent*, to the marriage; betwixt Chriſt and them. Such as, beſides what I have already named, theſe immediately following the text, *Thy time was a time of love, and I ſpread my ſkirt over them, and covered their nakedneſs:* there is the marriage *robe* wherewith he covers his naked bride, the garment of his righteouſneſs. *Yea, I ſwear unto thee;* there is the marriage *oath* by which his word is confirmed, *That by two immutable things, by which it is impoſſible for God to lie, they might have ſtrong conſolation*, &c. And *I entered into a covenant with thee;* there is the marriage *bond;* the covenant that ſtandeth faſt in Chriſt: here all is done to her hand, when ſhe could do nothing. *I entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God*, And *thou becameſt mine!* there is the marriage *relation* conſtitute, and the union betwixt Chriſt and his bride made up. I became thine, and thou became mine: I became thy Head and Huſband, and thou became my bride and ſpouſe; I manifeſted my good-will toward thee; and I made thee *willing in the day of my power.*

(2.) Some love-tokens *concomitant* are here mentioned, from ver. 9.—14. *Then waſhed I thee with water,* ver. 9.;

ver. 9.; yea, *I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee.* This points out both pardoning grace, washing the conscience from the guilt of sin; and purifying grace, washing the heart from the filth of sin; *Whom he loves, he washes;* hence the song of the redeemed is, *To him that loved us, and washed us in his blood.*—And he washed us from our blood; it is *bloods* in the original; and he washes us from blood-guiltiness; both from the guilt of our own blood, and the guilt of the blood of Christ; in his blood he washed us from our blood.—Again, *I anointed thee with oil*, ver. 9. Here is another notable love-token concomitant with the marriage, *His giving the Spirit*, the oil of gladness, wherewith he is anointed above measure; this he doth according to his promise, *I will put my Spirit within you*, and that not only to begin the good work, to quicken and renew, but to abide in us, and subdue sin more and more, to *help our infirmities*, to be a pledge and earnest of the glorious inheritance, to guide us to the land of uprightness, and to comfort us under all our troubles in the wilderness, till we come to enter into the joy of our Lord.—Again, *clothing* necessary for benefit and comfort, mentioned ver. 10. and an inventory of more that served for state and magnificence, mentioned ver. 11, 12, 13. Whatever literally these things import to the Jewish nation, yet spiritually they refer to the precious graces and blessings wherewith Christ adorns his bride.—Yea, here is not only raiment, but *food*, ver. 13. *Thou didst* EAT *fine flour, honey, and oil;* pointing out the best cheer, *The feast of fat things, and wines on the lees;* heavenly manna; the flesh and blood of the Son of God. Whom he loves with a conjugal love, he gives them food and raiment, and all provisions necessary.—Yea, not only so, but *beauty* and *renown*, ver. 14. *Thy renown went forth among the heathen, for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee.* What comeliness, what glory does he put upon his bride? Even his own glory, according to that wonderful word, John xvii. 22. *The glory which thou gave me, I have given them.* What glory the Fa-

ther gives the Son, the Son gives the bride; and so they are beautiful through his beauty, and glorious within, through his glory; righteous through his righteousness. O what love-tokens are here!

(3.) Some love-tokens *consequential* are here also mentioned; not only consequential to the marriage, but consequential to our adulterous carriage after marriage; the love-tokens posterior to this is his *marvellous recovering* of his backsliding bride, after her whorish departure from him: see the sum of the charge, ver. 15. *But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and played the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornication on every one that passed by.* This charge of the bride's whoredom is enlarged to the 60th verse of the chapter in many particulars. And her departure from her Lord is ushered in with distrusting of him, and trusting in her own borrowed robes, and created graces; and indeed, an *evil heart of unbelief* is the spring of departure from the living God: all our whorish departures from our glorious Lord and Husband, arise from that source. But behold the love-tokens of restoring grace and recovering mercy ushered in with a *nevertheless*, ver. 60. NEVERTHELESS *I will remember my covenant with thee, and will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant:* though thou hast broken covenant with me, I will remember my covenant with thee; thou hast been so provoking, and I have been so provoked by thee, that one would think there was no reconciliation to be expected, but that the bargain was wholly broke, yet he was ever *mindful of his covenant*, that stands fast in Christ; and his remembrance will create a remembrance in us; *Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed*, ver. 61. O here is great love in putting us in remembrance, and putting us to shame! This is more fully expressed in the last verse; *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* Behold! what rays of love shine out after that dark night of distance and sinful departure! God is in Jesus Christ pacified towards us for all that we have done

done amiss against him; and when God deals thus graciously, what effect doth it produce? Why, whenever the father of the prodigal ran to him and kissed and embraced him, then the prodigal son was ashamed, and confounded, saying, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* The more sense we have of pardoning mercy, and of God's being pacified, the more will grief and shame for sin have room in our hearts, that ever we should have offended such a gracious Lord. The soul is confounded with the sense of God's astonishing mercy, in returning to such a desperate backslider, that played the harlot with so many lovers; and confounded in the view of its own madness and ingratitude; in so much, that these love-tokens of recovering and restoring mercy, consequential to the bride's whorish breaking of the marriage-bond; these love-tokens that are like new conversions, may be even more remarkable than the first conversion, or the first love-tokens ever were.

Now, here is *God's time of love;* it is his time of love-calls, love-visits, love-looks and love-tokens; love-tokens antecedent, concomitant, and consequential to the marriage. The *antecedent* tokens point out divine commiseration, and his love of pity and compassion in our base and black estate. The *concomitant* tokens point out divine delectation, and his love of delight and complacency in our beautified state by his grace. The *consequential* tokens point out divine restoration, or his restoring and receiving love, after our apostasy.—— This subject of divine love, and of his time of love, is of vast extent, therefore I have confined myself to a glance at it, from the context only.

III. The next thing proposed was, To make it *evident*, that he shows his love at such a *remarkable juncture*, as to make it appear our time of need is his time of love; our time of misery is his time of mercy; our worst time, the time of manifesting most kindness.— This is plain from what I have already said; yet it may be necessary further to evince it, both from the beginning of the good work, and from the progress thereof

thereof in the Lord's people, both when they are ſinners, and when they are ſaints; their worſt time is ſtill his time of love.

1ſt, When they are SINNERS, and when he begins the good work, it were enough to ſay that he comes to convince and convert them in mercy, when they are in a ſtate of nature and alienation from God, and rebellion againſt him; but I ſhall advance a few inſtances, to put the matter beyond queſtion.

1. We find God has ſhewed love and mercy to ſinners when they have arrived at a *monſtrous perfection of ſinning againſt him;* as we ſee in Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10,—15. *And the Lord ſpoke to Manaſſeh and to his people, but they would not hearken; wherefore the Lord brought upon him the captains of the hoſt of the king of Aſſyria, which took Manaſſeh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his fathers. And prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his ſupplication, and brought him again to Jeruſalem into his kingdom. Then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God.* God ſhewed mercy to him when he was at his worſt, uſing all magical arts, making the ſtreets of Jeruſalem run with blood; then God ſaid to him when he was in his blood, *Live.* He caſt the ſkirt of love over him, and his time was a time of love.

2. We find God had ſhewed mercy and love to ſinners when they have been *embruing their hands in the blood of the ſaints*, madly perſecutng the church and people of God. Thus, you know, he ſhewed mercy to Paul, as he himſelf declares, Acts xxiv.—— When he rode to Damaſcus, God ſnatched him as a brand out of the burning, and ſhot a beam of love into his heart, when he might have deſtroyed him with a thunderbolt of wrath.

3. We find God has ſhewed mercy when ſin has, to appearance, been *beyond mercy*, by ſinners their embruing their hands in the *blood of the Son of God*, the Saviour of the world; yet he ſaid to them when they were in their blood, *Live.* For many of the Chriſt-

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crucifying Jews are convinced and converted, Acts ii. and made so many trophies of the riches and freedom of his grace. Their time of sin and misery was his time of love and mercy.

1. We find he has shewed mercy to sinners that have spent *all their time in sinning against him;* witness the thief on the cross, and these called at the eleventh and last hour: mercy has stept in between them and the pit, when they were just ready to fall into hell. What astonishing mercy is this! that the Son of God should say to a man that had spent all his days in sin, to the very last day of his life, and then to tell him, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* But whether sooner or later there is none to whom he effectually says, *Live*, but he says it *when they are in their blood;* their very worst time is his time of love.—But I pass many other instances.

2*dly*, When they are SAINTS, or in the progress of his loving-kindness towards them, still their time of need is his time of love; their worst time his loving time. Hence,

1. These and the like *declarations*, Psalm iv. 1. *O God, thou hast enlarged me, when I was in distress.* Psal. cxvi. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.* Psalm cxxxvi. 23. *He remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever.* Deut. xxxii. 36. *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and that there is none shut up or left.* Nothing left but black clouds of despair, and black signs of wrath, and black fears of ruin, then shine forth the fair beams of love.

2. For this cause is the *throne of grace* erected, that there we may find grace to help in time of our need, Heb. iv. 16. For this cause God takes names to himself, importing our time of need to be his time of love. Psal. ix. 9. he is called a *refuge in time of trouble.* Isa. xxv. 4. *A strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in their distress. A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible one is as a storm against the wall.* Isa. xxxii. 2. He is called a *hiding*

place

place from the wind, a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is our hope in an evil day.

3. Conſider, for further clearing this, the *harmony* between our time of need and his time of love: hence ordinarily your time of *darkneſs* is his time of *inlightening* love, according to that word, *To the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs. Though I walk in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light unto me.*—Your time of *deadneſs* is his time of *quickening* love; hence that prayer, frequently in the Pſalms, *Quicken me, according to thy word.*—Your time of *fear* is his time of *favour*, according to that word, *Fear not, for I am with thee.*—Your time of *difficulty* is his time of *direction*, according to that word, *I will lead the blind in ways they know not; and in paths which they have not known.*

4. His time of love to his people, or of manifeſting his love, is ordinarily when their time of need is *moſt notable.* He does not always ſhow his love at the time that we think the time of need, but that he knows to be the time of need, which is when the time of need is moſt extreme. Hence his time of love is ſometimes, in their extremity of *guiltineſs*, when they have made him *ſerve with their ſins, and wearied him with their iniquities*, then he hath ſaid, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for my name's ſake*, Iſa. xliii. 25.—Sometimes in their extremity of *rebellion* and *incorrigibleneſs*; when, tho' he hides himſelf and ſmites, yet they have *gone on frowardly in the way of their hearts*, even then he has ſaid, *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him*, Iſaiah lvii. 18.—Sometimes in their extremity of *remiſneſs*, when they had neither heart nor hand for prayer and pleading with himſelf for his pity; *When he ſaw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no interceſſor; therefore his own arm brought ſalvation*, Iſaiah lix. 16.—Sometimes in the extremity of *want* and *neceſſity*, Iſaiah xli. 17. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Jacob will not forſake.*—Sometimes in the extremity of *affliction*, when *deep calleth unto deep, and all his waves*

and

and billows pass over them, then he *commands his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song is with them*, Psalm xlii. 7, 8.—Sometimes in their extremity of *desertion*, when they are saying, *The Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten me*; then he appears saying, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee*, Isaiah xlix. 14, 15.—Sometimes in the extremity of *temptation*, when burnt with fiery darts, and buffeted by Satan, he readily relieves with loving words; *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness*, 2 Cor. xii. 9.—Sometimes in the very *last extremity*, in the extremity of *death*, and the extremity of their extremity; when, like Lazarus, they are stinking in their graves of sin and security, then he speaks the quickening word, and says to the dead and dry bones, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*

Quest. *May not God leave his own in their most extreme need, and in their last battle?*

Answ. We cannot tell what God *may* do when he goes out of his ordinary road; *judgment is his strange work*, especially when it seems to be execute toward a saint; but God may suffer strange and extraordinary things to fall out toward saints themselves, as presages of strange and extraordinary wrath and vengeance coming upon a secure generation; but certainly it is God's ordinary way to help his people in their last extremities, and make their time of greatest need his time of love, wherein he steps in for their salvation. Nay, what am I saying, that it is his *ordinary* way? Let me correct the word, in spite of the devil, and unbelief, and all dark and dismal-like providences; I will take back the word and say it is his *constant* way. Though a saint in the last battle should die distracted, and seem to be a sacrifice to the devil and his instruments; yet that last exremity is the time of love, wherein he leads them through the darkest trance to the fairest field of everlasting joy and triumph. When we consider what power the devil got over the body of Christ, to carry

it hither and thither, what do we know how far he may get power over the body of a member of Chriſt? We find, upon Satan's application againſt Job, there was a twofold power given him; the firſt was, *all that he hath* is in thy power; the ſecond was, he *himſelf;* that is, his body; *Behold he is in thine hand, only ſpare his life.* If God had but allowed a third application, and had let out another link of the enemy's chain, the utmoſt would have been even take his life, and I will take him home. But this, by way of digreſſion, though yet, I hope, not far out of the way.

I have ſhown you, that all our time of need, both from firſt to laſt, is his time of love; *Thy time was a time of love.*

If any further enquire, *Why God chuſes to make ſuch a time of need and extremity to be his time of love?* I ſhall only anſwer in a word. God, in his ſovereignty, having fixed a time for the *decree's breaking forth*, wherein theſe with whom he travelled ſo long in the womb of his electing and redeeming love ſhould be brought forth, he keeps the time to the moment that he fixed upon; and he *waits to be gracious;* that is, he waits the time of love, and he makes it jump with our time of need and extremity, for magnifying the riches and freedom of his grace, and for engaging the ſinner more to himſelf, and to his ſervice; and he makes his time of ſhowing love at firſt, and always afterwards, to the end of the believer's life, to jump and agree with their extreme neceſſity, for accenting the ſong of the redeemed in heaven, *To him that loved them, and waſhed them in his blood*, and pulled them out of the fire, and plucked them out of the devil's hands, and raiſed them from the bottom of hell, to the battlements of heaven; from the depths of miſery, to the heights of glory; he makes the depths of his love to anſwer the depths of their extremity. As by this means he ſhews his glory, ſo he ſtains the pride of man, makes his viſits more precious, kills our enmity with his kindneſs, quickens love to him, and learns us to truſt in him even at the worſt; and ſhows the height of his thoughts above our thoughts, as the heaven is higher than the earth,

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he having thoughts of peace towards us, when we reckoned he had thoughts of wrath, and designs to ruin us.——Thus he shows his wonders.

IV. The next thing was, To show that this is matter of *wonder* and *admiration*, which is the fourth thing in the text, BEHOLD! *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

1. It is wonderful, if we consider the *nature of* GOD, *the Lover.* If we look to his spotless holiness, and that he is of *purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*, O how mysterious and wonderful is it! that he should show his love to any of Adam's black posterity, so spotted with iniquity?—If we look to his infinite *justice*, that he can no more cease to punish sin, than he can cease to be God; justice being as essential to his name as mercy. How wonderful is his love! if he had not found a ransom, there would have been no vent for his love; but grace reigns through Christ's righteousness.—Again, if we look to his infinite *highness*, it makes his love wonderful: his majesty is infinite; he is *the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity.* Surely may we cry, when he comes to show his love, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou should come under my roof.*

2. It is wonderful, if we consider the *nature of* MAN, the *loved object*, to whom he shows mercy. What are we by nature? enemies to God, rebels to the crown of heaven, children of the devil; who but a God could answer his own question? *How shall I put you among the children, and give thee the pleasant land?* How shall I give thee a title to heaven, that art so justly intitled to hell? If we look upon our baseness, O the wonders of his kindness! May we not say with wonder, *Will God in very deed dwell with men on earth*, on the earth his footstool! May we not sing, as Psal. cxiii. 6. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, that dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold things that are in heaven?* And much more may we say, Who is like unto him, and that humbleth himself to show his love to worms on the earth? Whence is this that the King of glory should look upon vile dust? If we view the

oppoſition we make to his love, the reſiſtance he meets with from the devils of hell without us, and, the devils of luſts, ſin, and corruption within us, and how we fight againſt his love and kindneſs, is this the manner of man to ſhow love in this caſe? O wonderful! O condeſcending Jeſus! O patient Chriſt! whom we have kept ſo long at the back of the door, that yet he ſhould both forgive and forget all the wrongs we have done him, ſaying, *Thy ſins and iniquities will I remember no more!* We commit the fault, and he makes ſatisfaction. And if we view not only the bad entertainment he gets from us, at the firſt diſcoveries of his love; but the affronts he meets with afterwards, from time to time, the abuſes of his goodneſs, *turning his grace to wantonneſs, grieving his Spirit*, and madly following other lovers, till *he hedge up our way with thorns*, that we may not overtake them: O wonderful! that after this, love ſhould reclaim us, and make us ſay, *We will go and return to our firſt huſband, for then it was better with us than now*, Hoſea ii. 7.

3. It is wonderful, if we conſider that a *time of love* is denied to *millions of better creatures than us*. It was never allowed to fallen angels; there was never ſuch a word as that, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with* angels that fell; but, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*, and among men. Has he not paſſed many nations, and come to us, proclaiming the joyful ſound of everlaſting love in Chriſt Jeſus? in ſo much, that nothing hinders our enjoyment of it, but unbelief, and hardneſs of heart; and amongſt us, are there not ſome more highly privileged than others? O believer, wonder that he hath paſſed by a thouſand, and ſhewed his love to you the worſt of them all, and even when you was at your worſt. O wonderful diſtinguiſhing love! that paſſes by twenty houſes, and falls upon one! that paſſes by twenty ſouls, and comes upon yours! Many a heart here this day never yet was touched or fired with this love, and your heart may be ſet a burning within you.

4. It is wonderful, if we conſider, the *long train* of the time of love; both the train of bleſſing it infers, and

and the train of times it includes. What a train of bleſſings does the time of love infer? or, what good is done to the ſoul? It brings life, and light, and pardon, and peace; juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification; grace, glory, and every good thing; it brings God, and Chriſt, and the Spirit, and with them all things. The time of love is the time of gifts, when God gives Chriſt and all things with him. What a long train and tract of times it includes? The time of love has a beginning only in our view, but to God it has neither a beginning nor an end: the time of love began before time, in the heart of God from all eternity purpoſing, and in the heart of Chriſt from all eternity tranſacting with the Father in our room; therefore, he has ſaid, Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee.* The time of love to us is when he lets down the cords of his love, like a heart-ſtring, to draw up our hearts to his heart: and as the time of love runs through every period of the believer's life, while he is here, in ſo many fruits and effects of divine love, let out from time to time; ſo it is never at an end, ſo long as his love to Chriſt endures; though he *viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, yet his loving-kindneſs will he not take away from him*, nor conſequently *from them*; for, *his ſeed ſhall endure for ever*, Pſalm lxxxix. 32, 33, 36. The love that he ſhows in the time of love, includes love before time, from all eternity; and love after time, even to all eternity; therefore it is juſtly wonderful, and expreſſed with a *Behold! Behold, thy time was the time of love!*

V. I come to the *fifth* thing, which was the *application*. Is it ſo, as has been ſaid, *That God ſhows his love to ſinners at ſuch a remarkable juncture, that their time of need and miſery appears to be his time of love and mercy*; then,

1. Let us apply it for *admiration*. O let us admire and adore the wonders of redeeming love! It deſerves our higheſt admiration; when we have ſpent our thoughts

thoughts upon it, it is fit we ſhould ſupply the defect of our thought with admiration. Let us admire the *height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love of God in Chriſt;* that the guilt of criminals ſhould be transferred upon the innocent, and he expoſed to the ſtroak of juſtice: that the immortal God ſhould be clothed with mortality; the wonder of angels expoſed to the reproach of men; that he who was in the *form of God* ſhould appear in the *form of a ſervant;* and the Lord of life become obnoxious to the pains of death, and all that the love of God might vent toward ſinners, and that he ſhould take occaſion to ſhow his love to ſinners when they are at their worſt.—Herein let us ſee and admire the *freedom* of the grace and love of God; that he ſhould take hold of ſuch profane perſons, ſuch polluted perſons, ſuch loathſome perſons! O that the time of loathing ſhould be the time of love! —Herein ſee and admire the *power* of the grace of God, that can conquer ſinners at the height of their rebellion, and overcome their enmity, and ſupply all their needs. —See and admire the *wiſdom* of the grace and love of God, that he ſhould conſult the concerns of his own glory and our good ſo wonderfully. He conſults the glory of his juſtice while mercy vents through a ranſom, and grace through righteouſneſs, that magnifies the law, and ſatisfies the juſtice of God: he conſults our good wonderfully by ſhowing his love at a time wherein his love may do us moſt good; ſee and wonder at the wonderfulneſs of his mercy, love, and grace.

2. Let us apply it for *examination.* Try what ſhare you have had of this wonderful love of God in Chriſt; and whether *your time of need* has been *his time of love,* either now, at this occaſion, or formerly. For gaining time, I forbear offering marks and evidences of this, and only propoſe, that you reflect upon what has been ſaid concerning the *time of need* and the *time of love.*

(1.) What ſenſe have you ever had of the *time of need?* Have you ever ſeen yourſelf in your *polluted* ſtate, *lying*

lying in your blood? Your *helpleſs* ſtate, *no eye to pity you?* Your *loathſome* ſtate, *caſt out to the loathing of your perſons?* Your *dangerous* ſtate, *in the open field*, lying open to the wrath and vengeance of God? Have you ever got a ſenſe and conviction of your *dead* ſtate, as being under the power of ſin, and under the ſentence of the law? The time of love is uſually uſhered in with a ſenſe of ſin, and fear of wrath. Was you ever pricked in your hearts, and made to cry, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* If you never felt a time of extreme need, it ſeems you never have known a time of love. But,

(2.) What experience have you of the *time of love*, upon the back of your extreme need? Got you ever a loving call with power? A quickening word, when you was in your blood? A word that put life into your dead ſoul? Got you ever a *love-viſit*, and a view of the glory of the Lord Jeſus, and of God in him? Though it was but a paſſing viſit; yet has he paſſed by you, ſo as to give you a ſight of his *back parts*, by the bye; for, *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly.*——Got you ever a *love-look*, that made you look again unto him? a look that pierced and pained your heart, and made you ſick of love to him, and deſire after him?——Got you ever any *love-tokens;* whether got you theſe I mentioned, that may be called *antecedent* to the marriage? Did he ever caſt *his ſkirt over you*, and make you flee under the covert of his blood and righteouſneſs? Did he ever ſwear to you, and enter into covenant with you, by making you to take *hold of his covenant*, and word of grace and promiſe?—What know you of the love-tokens *concomitant* to the marriage? Did he never *waſh your heart* and *conſcience* in his blood, by giving you *joy and peace in believing*? Did he never *anoint* you with the oil of his Spirit, ſo as the chariot-wheels of your ſouls have been made to run ſweetly and ſwiftly, by reaſon of this anointing, in the duties of religion? Has he never *ſatisfied your longing ſoul?* Though you have not got what you would be at, yet by giving you ſo much as made all the world taſteleſs to you, and Chriſt above all things precious? (If he has not fed you with joy, has he fed you with godly ſorrow and mourn-

mourning for sin?) Has he never *beautified your deformed soul*, by letting you see your own vileness and deformity, and that all your beauty, strength, righteousness, and store was only in himself; and made you to see that all your excellency lay only in him, in whom *all the seed of Israel are justified, and shall glory?*—What know you of the love-tokens *consequent* to the marriage and, perhaps, to your whorish departure from him? Did he ever *shame* you for your unkindness by his surprizing returns, so as you was confounded and ashamed when he was pacified toward you? Did ever the *renewed sense* of his love and grace, manifested to a rebel and runaway like you, melt your heart, and lay you in the dust before him?——Try what love-tokens he has given you in the time of your extreme need, *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

I shall now close with a short *advice*, to you who *never met with a time of love*, in point of power, engaging your heart to the love of Christ. Though you have enjoyed a time of love, in gospel-offers, and loving-courtships, yet you have despised his loving-offers to this day. O what art thou doing, sinner, while despising the riches of divine love, goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering? The scripture tells you what you are doing, Rom. vii. 5. thou *art treasuring up wrath to thyself against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Oh! you that were never convinced of a time of need, nor affected with your dismal state, as lying in your blood, nor concerned about a time of love, or a day of power, remember, that there is a time of wrath, and a day of death, and judgment a coming; and if you remain despisers of the grace and love of God, the wrath coming upon you is both the wrath of God and of the Lamb; not only the wrath of an *angry God*, which is terrible vengeance, but the wrath of the *slighted Lamb of God*, which is double vengeance: *How shall you escape if ye neglect so great a salvation?* Terrible wrath is coming upon gospel-slighters in Scotland; upon gospel-despisers in Dunfermline; do you hear

hear of this wonderful love and yet slight it? Then, *Behold, ye despisers, wonder, and perish! He that believeth not shall be damned; the wrath of God abideth upon him.* Gave you never any entertainment to the news of grace and love, but to abuse it to *lasciviousness*, and *turn the grace of God into wantonness*, and to encourage yourselves in sin and wickedness? As sure as you have now a day of grace, the day of wrath is a-coming; and perhaps this is the last hour of the day of grace, and of the time of love, and what will you do with it? Will you let it pass away, and be for ever lost? O sinner! since the time of wrath is not yet come, though it is at hand; since the time of love is yet lasting, will you take and accept of divine grace and love, when he comes to give you now, perhaps, the last offer? And he has spared you out of hell till you get it; that either upon refusal, you may be for ever inexcusable or upon acceptance, you may be for ever happy.

Well then, you that have mispent all the time of life, and the time of love till now; he that yet continues the time of love with you, the time of love-offers is saying to you, *Behold me, behold me*, in order to marriage with me. Come and take me, for a match to your souls, to make it up for ever. O Sirs, will you match with him that can pardon all yours sins, and pay all your debt, supply all your wants, and heal all your wounds? Can cover all your spots, and cleanse all your filthiness, and loose all your bands, these bands of sin, hell, and death wherewith you have been bound all your days? Will you, that can do nothing, leave him that can do all things for you? Will you, to whom death and judgment seem to be terrible, in a little, will you have him that can make death safe, and judgment sweet, and all trials by the way easy to you, by giving either a merciful support under them, or merciful issue to them? O will you, that are liable to an eternity of torments, have him that can give you an eternity of joy and happiness, in the vision and fruition of himself? Will you have him to make you holy and happy? If you have no will to this bargain, then surely, tho' you perish eternally, God does you no wrong,

while he gives you your will, and lets you alone, saying, *Ye will not come to me that you might have life.* Nothing but his omnipotent power can make you willing; but since this gospel is the organ of his power, and that if his drawing power be let down effectually by any means in the world, it will be by these cords of love and grace that are hanging down among your hands; therefore, Come, sinners.

To let down the cords as far as I can, by his warrant, be what thou wilt, *To you is the word of this salvation sent;* the grace and mercy of God is laid in your lap; if you shake it not away from you, by unbelief and enmity, you shall have it, be what you will: why? what are you, or what have you been? Are you a drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, adulterer, a filthy Magdalen, or bloody Manasseh, that have hitherto contemned the grace of God, and the Son of God? Are you the worst that ever breathed on the face of the earth; no matter; while this time of love lasts, grace is content to take you at your worst, and to make the worst time that ever you had, to be the best time that ever you saw. What are you, sinner? Are you a monster of sin? Are you a devil for sin? Be it so, since you are not yet a devil in hell, but a devil on earth, and a devil in flesh, that is not such a wonder as a God in flesh; and behold here is an incarnate God come to save incarnate devils. To you that are yet out of hell, he is saying, *Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* To you that are in the flesh, and not yet damned spirits, the word of God says of this God in Christ, *O thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come,* Psalm lxv. 2. All that are yet human flesh, are welcome to come to him; whatever sort of flesh you be, be you never such filthy flesh, or devilish flesh; God has sent his own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh,* that all sinful flesh may come to him, that he may form them into the likeness of an holy God.

If any trembling heart here be thinking, O is it possible that this call is to me, that this offer is to me? Yes, to thee, man, woman; to thee, lass, lad; to

you

you that are fareſt off and neareſt hand me; to every one of you within theſe walls, this offer of love and mercy comes in his name, that has ſaid, *Go, preach the goſpel to every creature*, to every rational creature under heaven. What ſay you? I was never ſo unfit to come or ſo unable; I am at the very worſt in ſin and miſery, at the very height of wickedneſs and wo.—— What? is it the time of the greateſt need of grace, power, and pity? Well, God who *waits to be gracious*, perhaps has been waiting till this moment, and waiting for this moment that your time of need may be his time of love, and your time of miſery his time of mercy: are you content it ſhould be ſo? Has this word taken hold of your heart, ſaying, Oh! *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* O! a thouſand worlds for Chriſt. Indeed, an offer of him is worth a thouſand worlds, much more himſelf: do you ſee it to be ſo? and are you made willing to have him that he may ſave you from ſin, as well as from hell? And to ſave you preſently, that you may never be a ſlave to your ſins any more, but a ſervant to Jeſus? Then we may ſay, *Behold his time is a time of love*, not only in point of offer, but a time of love in point of power.

I intended to have addreſſed myſelf to you whoſe time, either now or formerly, has been a time of love: but time does not permit; and this will fall in as natively afterwards.

SERMON XCI.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.

[The ſecond Sermon on this Text.]

THE time of life is ſhort and uncertain; and we cannot improve it aright, if we be not acquainted with a time of love. The time of trouble is what

we may all lay our account with; for, *Man is born to trouble;* and we cannot have true peace or reſt therein if we know not a time of love. The time of death is approaching; and what have we to ſweeten the thoughts of death, if we know nothing of a time of love? It is therefore moſt neceſſary we know it.

Having formerly improved this ſubject in an uſe of *admiration* and *examination*, we ſhall now, at this time, improve it in an uſe of *information*, by deducing two inferences.

1*ſt*, Hence ſee, that God, in *ſovereignty*, may *diſappoint his people*, and make the time of *ſeeming anger* and of *wrath-like diſpenſations* to be a *time of love*. As *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways;* ſo, his time is not our time: we may hope he will manifeſt his love at ſuch a time, and he may diſappoint our hopes; and we may fear he will diſplay his anger at ſuch a time, and he may diſappoint our fears, by manifeſting his love. *He makes his time of ſeeming wrath toward his people to be his time of love.*

As this inference is ſuitable to the text, context, and doctrine; ſo being ſuitable to the circumſtances of many here under viſible evidences of God's anger in their families *: I ſhall inſiſt a little upon this by anſwering theſe four queſtions. 1. What *ſeeming anger* may be ſhowing toward his people whoſe time is notwithſtanding a time of love? 2. What *love-deſigns* may be carrying on by theſe *wrath-like* diſpenſations? 3. What *love* is there in theſe *angry-like* diſpenſations? 4. What *leſſons* may we learn from this inference?

QUEST. 1. *In what reſpect may he ſeem* ANGRY *with theſe whoſe time, notwithſtanding, is a time of* LOVE?

ANSW. 1. It is moſt angry-like when they *fall into ſin*, when he *ſuffers them to ſin*, and *leaves them to themſelves*, as he did David, Peter, Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31.; and leave them to *heart-hardneſs; Wherefore haſt thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Iſaiah lxiii. 17.

* At the time when this ſermon was preached, moſt of the children in Dunfermline were ſeized with the *ſmall pox*, and vaſt numbers of them dying.

2. When

2. When they are under many *grievous temptations*, and *buffettings of Satan*, as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.; and Job, as you read, chap. i.

3. When they are under ſad *deſertion*, ſaying, as Pſal. xxii. 1. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? How long wilt thou hide thyſelf?* Pſal. xiii. 1, 2.

4. When they are under great *outward affliction* on their perſons, families, friends, names, eſtates, or otherwiſe, Pſal. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.* 2 Tim. iii. 12. *If any man will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, he muſt ſuffer perſecution.*

You will, perhaps, ſay, Is there no difference between the afflictions of the godly and of the wicked? To this we reply, No difference as to the *matter* of them, and in their own *nature*; but vaſtly different in their *uſe*; even as water in baptiſm taken out of a well, ſo much of the water of that well may be taken for waſhing the hands, ſo much for baptizing; it is the ſame water, but the latter is made uſe of as a *ſeal of God's covenant.* Thus, when a fever comes, the godly man's perſon, or child, may be as ſorely handled as the wicked; but the one is bleſſed, and not the other, the uſe of affliction to the one, and to the other, is vaſtly different, Jer. xxiv. The prophet here ſees a viſion of two ſorts of figs, the one was good figs, and the other bad, and naughty. And what are theſe but two ſorts of people, that were carried captive to Babylon? Some of them, as good figs, whom God took a care of when carried away, to whom he ſays, that he *will have his eyes upon them for good, and not for evil*; and that he will *bring them again*: but as for the other, he ſays, that his eyes were upon them *for evil* and not *for good*; and that he would *pull them down.* Thus, all the people go to captivity together; but yet never think he had no more reſpect to his own among them, than to others. Afflictions come upon the wicked, ſeeking ſatisfaction; but upon the godly, for correction: God out of love chaſtiſes them for their faults. There is a great difference when God, with a rod, ſtrikes his enemies out of anger; and when, with

that

that fame rod, he ſtrikes his children in love. Therefore, when judgments come upon a land, or a place, let not the godly themſelves think they ſhall be free; but as when a beſom comes to ſweep a houſe, if there be droſs and dirt in it, and alſo diamonds and ſome gold among it, both of them may be ſwept to the door together; but this is the difference, the dirt rots away, but the diamonds or gold remains of as great worth as it was at firſt, till it be ſought and got again.

The godly may lay their account with ſuch troubles, and afflictions as the wicked meet with. Why?

(1.) Theſe who are partakers in *ſin*, muſt be partakers in *puniſhment*; for, though the godly were guiltleſs in men's eyes, yet before God, and in their own eyes, they are guilty, and ſinful as others are: for, it is hard to live with the wicked, and not be infected with their plagues, and ſo they muſt have part of their judgment.

(2.) There is no promiſe made to any of that ſort, as to *exempt* them from the croſs. Hence the true Iſraelites and Canaanites cannot be diſcerned by theſe outward things; yet ſay not there is no difference between the afflictions of the one, and the other, as I have ſhown above.

QUEST. 2. *What* LOVE DESIGNS *may be carrying on by thoſe* WRATH-LIKE *diſpenſations?*

ANSW. 1. The firſt love deſign thereby is to make *ſin bitter*, and bring off their hearts from it, and make them leave it. *Fooliſhneſs is bound up in the heart of a child*, even of God's children, *but the rod of correction drives it off*, Prov. xxii. 15. See Jer. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee; Know then and ſee that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee ſaith the Lord God of hoſts. By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged*, Iſa. xxvii. 9.

2. The next love deſign is, to *heal their hearts*: to humble the lofty heart, and ſoften the hard heart: therefore he puts them in the fire to melt them; they are naturally hard, ſtout, light, and proud: God melts them

them with this fire; *Thou haſt tried us with fire, as ſilver is tried.* See Job xiii. 16. *For God maketh my heart ſoft.*

3. The third love deſign is, to make them *weary of this world*, by finding they meet with ſuch bad entertainment in it; *Ariſe ye, and depart, for this is not your reſt, for it is polluted, it ſhall deſtroy you even with a ſore deſtruction*, Mic. ii. 10. Hence John xvi. 33. *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but in me ye ſhall have peace; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

4. Another love deſign is, to *awaken them:* but he gives them ſomething ado, and keeps them buſy and fighting: *Theſe are the nations God left to prove Iſrael by them; ſlay them not, leſt my people forget*, Judg. iii. 1. Jer. xlviii. 11. They would ſtink and corrupt if they were not carried into captivity, and *emptied from veſſel to veſſel.*

5. The next love deſign is, to *exerciſe faith and patience;* Rom. v. 3. *We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.* James i. 2, 3. *Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience: but let patience have her perfect work.*

6. Another love deſign is, to *bring them to themſelves, by prayer, and other duties*, otherwiſe they would miſtake themſelves, Hoſ. v. 15. and vi. 1. *In their afflictions they ſhall ſeek me early, ſaying, Come let us return to the Lord, for he hath broken, and will heal.* True, indeed, hypocrites may cry, when they are afflicted; *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; and they returned and enquired early after God:——Yet they flattered him with their mouths*, Pſalm lxxviii. 35, 36. But even the children of grace need to be ſpurred up by the rod; and then they cry to their Father in another manner than hypocrites, in a kindly and cordial manner, Iſa. xxvi. 19. There it is ſaid of his people, *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening hand was upon them:* then *they viſited thee;* they were growing ſtrangers to God before the trouble came; they made him

few

few visits, and were like to grow out of acquaintance with him: but now they begin to renew their acquaintance with him; they *poured out a prayer:* formerly, before trouble came, they prayed, but their prayers were but drops; they came but slowly forth, drop by drop, like water out of a still; but now their prayers are poured out like water out of a fountain: they pour out their prayers, and pour out their hearts in prayer before the Lord, when his chastening is upon them; *They poured out prayer;* in the margin it is a SECRET SPEECH: they may meet with God in public duties and ordinances, but especially their main intercourse with him is in secret; there they speak with God, and commune with him: and thus by afflictions and chastisements their communion with God is advanced.—In a word, such are his love designs, by trials and wrath-like dispensations, that thereby he makes *his mercy the sweeter to them* when it comes: and their *love to God the greater*, because of his power and pity manifested to them in their afflictions.

QUEST. 3. *What* LOVE *is there in these afflictions, in punishments and chastisements? What love appears in them?*

ANSW. Besides what I have said, 1. There is love in the *measure* of the affliction; while it is not in fury, but in measure, and in pity; *Fury is not in me.—In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind*, Isa. xxvii. 4, 8. *As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*, Psal. ciii. 13.

2. There is love in bringing them under *one evil*, to to *save them from a greater;* 1 Cor. xi. 32. They are *chastised of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world.* See Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.

3. There is love in making them thus *sharers* of the *mercies of the covenant;* for afflictions are a covenant promise; See Sam. vii. 15. and Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32. For which the saints have prayed, as Jer. x. 24. *Correct me, Lord, but in judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing:* Thus Psalm vi. 1. and xxxviii. 1.

4. There

4. There is love in that thus he *favours and honours* them to take them under his correction, and care: See Job vii. 17. *What is man, that thou ſhouldſt magnify him? and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thy heart upon him?* Why? how doth he magnify and honour him? It follows, ver. 18. *And that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment.*

5. There is love in his giving *ſweet cordials* between-hands to bear up their ſpirits; particularly, ſome cordials of the new covenant; ſome words on which he cauſes them to hope, Pſal. cxix. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy ſervaut, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* Hence it follows, ver. 50. *This is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy word hath quickened me.* He quickens and refreſhes with his words of grace.

6. There is love in the *conſtant preſence of grace* that he allows them under their trouble, according to his promiſe, Heb. xiii. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Pſalm xci. 15. *I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.* When the goldſmith has caſt the gold into the fire, he leaves it not there; nay, then he waits beſt upon it, that he may ſuffer it to get no more of the fire than he ſees meet.

In a word, ſuch love there is in their afflictions that he is therein carrying on *all the love deſigns* that I was mentioning on the former head, and thus preparing them for the heavenly kingdom; *Our light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. They would die and rot in their ſins, if they were not *poured out from veſſel to veſſel.*

QUEST. 4. *What* LESSONS *may we learn from this inference?*

ANSW. 1. That we ought not to ſeek ſo much to be *rid of troubles;* we ought to ſubmit and comply with the troubles that are upon us, ſeeing they are ſuch excellent things, ſo profitable and medicinal: we ought neither to lothe at, nor fret under God's phyſic.

1. We ought to *accept of the puniſhment of ſin*, ſaying, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I*

have ſinned. We ſhould turn up our cheek to him that ſmiteth, and not weary of the Lord's chaſtiſements, ſeeing it is for ſin; *Why ſhould a living man complain? a man for the puniſhment of his iniquities?* Therefore,

3. We ought to *quit ſin*, ſaying, *What have I any more to do with idols?* God's deſigns, by trouble, to deſtroy ſome idol: join with him in ſeeking the deſtruction thereof; *I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and ſeek my face*, Hoſea v. 15.

4. Give *way to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and make *open doors* for him; for this is the great deſign of all afflicting diſpenſations: for they are ſo many knocks at the doors of our hearts. Give way to him in a fourfold capacity.

(1.) As a *Reprover*, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 17. Take with the charge of lukewarmneſs in being neither cold nor hot.

(2.) As a *Counſellor*, Rev. iii. 18. Hearken to his counſel, as a Prophet, and buy his *eye-ſalve*; his counſel, as a Prieſt, and buy his *white raiment*; his counſel, as a King, and buy his *tried gold*.

(3.) Give way to him as a *Corrector*, a loving corrector, Rev. iii. 9. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten:* he corrects us for our faults, and for our amendment. Be patient, which is a continued ſubmiſſion, and if ſenſe fail, hold by the word.

(4.) Give way to him as an *importunate Suitor*, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and ſup with him, and he with me.* He knocks by his word, and by his Spirit, and by his rod; invite him to come in, ſaying, as Laban in another caſe to Abraham's ſervant, Gen. xxiv. 31. *Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord: wherefore ſtandeſt thou without?* O come in and do not ſtand knocking, but make king's keys, and exert thy power and come in with ſalvation.——So much may ſuffice for the firſt inference. Hence,

2*dly*, I infer, that neither the *ſinning* nor the *ſuffering circumſtances* of the people of God, in this world, is

is *inconſiſtent with his ſpecial love* to them. *Thy time*, (though in the context both a ſinful and afflicted time,) *was a time of love.* By the love of God here, I do not underſtand, either *benevolence* or *good-will*, for this is common; *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* He has ſworn that he has *no pleaſure in the death of ſinners.* God may take pleaſure in the execution of his juſtice, but doth not in the puniſhment of the creature; *As I live, I have no pleaſure in the death of ſinners.* Nor do I here underſtand his love of *beneficence;* for, he does good to all, *He makes his ſun to ſhine upon the good and evil; and ſendeth his rain upon the juſt and unjuſt.* Nor his love of *deſtination* towards the elect unconverted; becauſe, whatever be his thoughts of peace, and deſigns of manifeſting love to them, yet he can take no pleaſure in them, as they are in themſelves, while out of Chriſt. But I underſtand his love of *complacency* and *delight.* Now, I ſay, his people's *ſinning* and *ſuffering circumſtances* here, are not *inconſiſtent with his complacential love* to them.

For the further clearing of this inference, I would 1. Show that the *ſinning circumſtances* of his people here, are not inconſiſtent with his love. 2. Give a diſcovery of *theſe perſons* whoſe ſinning circumſtances are indeed inconſiſtent with his love. 3. Show that the ſuffering and afflicted circumſtances of God's people are not *inconſiſtent* with his love to them. 4. Give a diſcovery of *theſe* whoſe carriage in their afflicted circumſtances is indeed inconſiſtent with this complacential love of God.

[1.] We are to ſhow that the *ſinning circumſtances* of God's people here, are not inconſiſtent with his love. This may be cleared in the four following remarks.

Remark 1. "That none of God's children in this "world, are *free of ſin:*" they have a *body of death in them;* the *company* of *two armies; two nations ſtruggling.* See Rom. vii. 15,—25.

Remark 2. "That they not only have sin, but it "may be *powerful* and *prevalent*:" POWERFUL, so as to carry them captive; *I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin, which is in my members*, Rom. vii. 23. PREVALENT, as David says, *Iniquities prevail against me.*

Remark 3. "That God observes and regards the "*truth of grace* in his people, though the *measure* may "be small; and he loves all his children, tho' some "of them are babes, 1 John ii. 12, 13, 14." Hence they are ready sometimes to speak thus, "I *pray* in- "deed; but, alas! I do not *wrestle*, like Jacob; nor "*water my couch*, like David: I *believe*; but I have "not *joy and peace in believing*: I *fear*; but I am not "in the *fear of God all the day long*: I *love* Christ; "but, O my love goes out after other things." Thus it is the *weakness*, not the *want* of grace, that troubles and perplexes them: yet God loves his children tho' weak.

Remark 4. "That the *life* of the believer is *hid with* "*Christ in God.*" It is not so much in himself as it is in Christ; and hence they are ready to conclude their sinful circumstances such, as are not consistent with divine love; but their life is most in their head.—— Four things the saints complain of, and they get ease only in Christ.—Alas! I am *guilty*; well, where get you ease but in Christ, as made of God your *righteousness*?—Oh! I have much *pollution*; well, where is your relief but in Christ, as made of God to you *sanctification*, the fountain of holiness!—Alas! there is much *folly* about me; where is your relief but in Christ, as made of God unto you *wisdom*?—Oh! I have no *strength* for *duty* or *difficulties*; well, where lies your strength but in Christ? *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; he is the *glory of their strength.* Hence the greatest part of the believer's inherent righteousness, in this world, lies in his faith, faith going out of himself to Christ for all. This shows, that however sinful his circumstances are, yet he is a favourite of heaven.

[2.] We

[2.] We are next to give a discovery of *these persons* whose sinning circumstances are indeed inconsistent with his love.——There are six sorts of sinners, whose sinful case is indeed inconsistent with God's complacential love.

1. These whose religion lies all in *externals;* and whose hearts were never exercised before God about sin and wrath; *This people draw nigh unto me with their mouths, and honour me with their lips; but their hearts are far removed from me*, Matth. xv. 18. Their hearts were never engaged to approach to God.

2. These who never knew the *power* of the gospel, but are only taken up with the outward pomp of it; pompuous words, the excellency of speech, the flourishes of eloquence, that tickle their fancies: they never got good of the word who never had better to say than this, O! there was a neat sermon; it was gilded with all the flowers of rhetoric, and embellished and set off with all the graces of oratory; an handsome and eloquent discourse; but never could say of any sermon, *Did not our hearts burn within us?* We were touched and conquered thereby. They know nothing that know not the power of the word; *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power:* See 2 Thess. i. 4. *The gospel came not in word, but in power.*

3. These who *persecute the people of God*, and have no favour for them, no complacency in them; though they can be civil to them as to others, yet they are far from preferring them to others, in esteeming them, or delighting in them. This is the brand of a natural man, for it is otherwise with God's children, *To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight*, Psalm xvi. 3.

4. These that can live *peaceably* in *any one sin*, without remorse, without repentance, or reluctance; or by bribing their judgment to defend it, or offering to God a satisfaction, like the whore in the seventh chapter of the Proverbs, *I have a peace-offering, this day have I performed my vows; come let us take our fill of love*, ver. 14, 18. God's children may have sin prevailing, but never have it peaceably reigning in them.

4. These

5. Thefe that were never brought off from the *pollutions of the world*, fuch as drunkenneſs, whoredom, fwearing, lying, cheating, ſtealing, Sabbath-breaking, *&c.* Some may eſcape theſe, through the knowledge of Chriſt, and yet be apoſtates, the *latter-end worſe than the beginning*, 2 Pet ii. 20. Sure then, they are in a ſad ſtate that never eſcaped ſin at all: they are not the ſpots of God's children.

6. Theſe that being *ſtrangers* to a *working* faith, are never brought beyond the legal or goſpel-hypocrite.—By the *legal*-hypocrite, I underſtand, the man that is full of *good works*, yet they have not faith for their root: theſe are caſt; for, *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.*—By a *goſpel*-hypocrite, I underſtand, theſe that *profeſs faith in Chriſt*, yet their faith has no *good works*, as the *fruits thereof;* theſe are caſt; becauſe, *As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.*

[3.] We come to ſhow, that the *ſuffering* and *afflicted circumſtances* of God's people are not *inconſiſtent* with his love to them. This may be clear from the following remarks.

Remark 1. "That God has *connected* ſin and ſuffering:"——By his DECREE; *Though hand join in hand, ſin ſhall not go unpuniſhed:* By the LAW; *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die, or ſuffer:* By the GOSPEL; *If his children break his law, and keep not his commandments; he will viſit their iniquity with the rod:* By his PROVIDENCE, wherein he declares himſelf a God that will *by no means clear the guilty.* What God has joined, we naturally ſeparate, ſaying, *We ſhall have peace, tho' we walk after the imagination of our hearts.* This was the firſt hereſy the devil bred in the world, *You ſhall not ſurely die*, though you ſin; but God has connected ſin and ſuffering.

Remark 2. "God's own people may lay their account with *ſuffering*, while they have *ſin.*" Though, through Chriſt, in a way of faith and repentance, they are freed from *hell*, and *eternal damnation*, yet they are not always freed from *temporal puniſhments* and *chaſtiſements;* nay, *You only have I known of all the nations*

of

of the earth ; therefore will I punish you. Though he *pardons their sins, yet he may take vengeance on their inventions.* Therefore,

Remark 3. " There are many *rods* they are visited " with." Sometimes *desertion*, sometimes *affliction*, sometimes *temptation, sickness, death* of friends and children ; *Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all*, Psal. xxxiv. 19.

Remark 4. " God has *glorious* and *merciful designs* " in afflicting them." Glorious with reference to himself ; and merciful with reference unto them.—As to *himself*, it is to clear his justice, and manifest his equity in the administration of his government, and that the world may not think he bears with sin in his own, or indulges them in their rebellion ; therefore, though David repented of his adultery and murder, and got a pardon ; yet because his sin was scandalous and offensive, and made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme ; therefore he must be punished with the sword of a bloody enemy, and a bloody sword must not depart from his house.—As to *them*, it is to do them good, to humble and prove them, to imbitter sin to them, and to make them forsake sin and flee to Christ, and that in their *affliction they may seek him early*, saying, *Come, let us return to the Lord, for he hath broken, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten and he will bind us up*, Hos. v. 15. and vi. 1. compared.

[4.] We now proceed to give a discovery of *these* whose carriage in afflicted circumstances is indeed, *inconsistent* with this *complacential love of God.*

1. Such as grow *worse* by their afflictions, and, instead of turning unto God, turn from him ; that gnaw their tongues and blaspheme, like these, Rev. xvi. 10. Is it not with many, as with Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 22. In his *distress he sinned yet more?* It is to be feared, many are worse instead of being better by the rod.

2. Such as are neither better nor worse, but rather *stupid* and *sottish*, never affected though afflicted. A child of God may become, in some respects, senseless for

for a little, with the acuteneſs and ſeverity of his affliction; but he comes to his ſenſes again, and is ſtirred up to a ſuitable affectedneſs before the Lord: but it is ſad when people are no way touched and moved with the hand of God upon them. It is a ſtubborn child that will not weep when the father chaſtiſes; *Thou haſt ſmitten them, but they have not grieved*, Jer. v. 3. Some are paſt feeling, they are, as it were, threſhed on, and yet they feel it not.

3. Such as feel their miſery and trouble, but do not *ſee the cauſe of it*; and therefore never take the right way to be rid of it; but being ſenſible of external trouble, look out for external help, as Ephraim *ſaw his wound*, and *went to King Jarib*; but none ſays, *Where is God my Maker*? Job xxxv. 9, 10. Though *they cry, by reaſon of the arm of the mighty, yet none ſaith, where is God my Maker, who giveth ſongs in the night*? Few prayers to God, little amendment.

4. Such as in their affliction *turn to God*, but it is not with their *whole heart, but feignedly*, Jer. iii. 10. They pray and cry fervently for eaſe and relief, yet hold faſt iniquity; or, if they forſake ſome ſins, yet not all; their main buſineſs is to get eaſe from trouble; thus Pharaoh cried, turned, confeſſed; *Pray for me that this death may be removed.* Some never deſire a prayer to be made for them till they fear they are on their death-bed: they go to God in affliction, like one that goes to a great man about buſineſs, not about a loving viſit; and if the buſineſs be done, they part and leave him, and perhaps never wait upon him again; they have got their buſineſs done, and they ſeek no more: ſuch are ſelfiſh ſeekers; that ſeek Chriſt only for the loaves.

5. Such as ſeem to *turn cordially*, and *to return*, but it is *not to the Moſt High*: they not only pray that God would remove the outward trouble, but they acknowledge ſin, and reſolve never to be ſo bad again; but it is merely a moral turning, whereby many deceive themſelves: they think their forſaking of ſome things, and reforming of ſome things, and performing of ſome duties,

duties, wherein they may be wonderfully affected, that this is true grace, but it is not so; it is a turning, indeed; but not to the *Most High*. Distance from God is the great evil; and nearness to him, through Christ, is that wherein our great happiness lies. Now, though men should go never such a length in reformation, if they live at a distance from God, it will be of little stead to them; the great design of the rod is not obtained: our righteousness must proceed from the influence of another covenant. People may turn to duty, and not to God, and they may turn to God, and yet not to Christ; or to God in Christ; as Christ said to the disciples, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* If we believe in God, and yet not believe in Christ, we believe not in the Most High; for God is most highly exalted only in Christ; *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father.* He that turns not to Christ by faith, never turns rightly to God by repentance.

6. Such as seem to turn to God and Christ, but *turn away from him again*, 2 Peter ii. 20,—23. And like these, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 37. *When he slew them, they sought him; yet their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*—— It is true, God's children may have many changes in their frames, and back-drawings in their hearts; but still they have a fixed purpose of heart to follow the Lord: like the mariner, that sets out for such a port, though he may be tossed at sea, and carried backward with contrary winds, yet his fixed purpose leads him to make for the designed haven, at which he at last arrives. God's children may draw back, but they are not as these that draw back to perdition; *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own way.*

SERMON XCII.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I passed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.

[The third Sermon on this Text.]

AS a *throne of grace* is erected for a *time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need;* So a *time of love* is ordered for a *time of need*, and a time of trouble: and, indeed, as none will apply to a throne of grace, but these that are poor and needy, and are really sensible of their poverty, and need, and necessity; so none will duly value and relish a time of love, but these that are brought to distress and trouble, especially under apprehensions of divine anger, wrath, and displeasure: hence our time of misery, and his time of mercy, are here joined together; *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

We have already improven this subject in several uses: We shall now proceed to another use of the doctrine, and that is of *examination.* Try then, if your *time of trouble* and *distress*, has been a *time of love:* for I cannot well separate these which the text and context join so closely.

First, We may view this *negatively.* There are some whose time of trouble is evidently *no* time of love; as,

1. These whose trouble and distress never make them find more of the *vanity of the world* discovered to them; nor their hearts ever more separate therefrom than formerly. If your farms and merchandise, your worldly concerns, (Mat. xxii. 5.) keep your hearts as much away from the gospel-feast, or from Christ, as ever,

ever, thou haſt got little good of thy trouble. If trouble in a world was bleſt to thee, the world would become more taſteleſs to thee; Jer. iii. 22, 23. *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God: Behold, in vain is ſalvation looked for from the hills and multitude of mountains.* Intimating, that as the Lord draws to himſelf, he looſes from the world.

2. Such as were never more *awakened* by their trouble to a ſerious concern about ſpiritual and eternal matters, ſurely they cannot read a time of love in their trouble; they continue aſleep, ſtill ſecure and careleſs; they are ſo far from being turned to God, that they are not riſen to their feet. See how David in his trouble is awakened to a concern about death and eternity, Pſal. xxxix. He ſees his *age as nothing*, and *every man vanity*; then he ſaid, *Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*

3. Such whoſe trouble never put them to *pray more frequently* and *fervently* than they were accuſtomed to do, and in another manner; when there is no change in their prayers. It is true, ſome in trouble may turn from ſottiſhneſs to ſerioufneſs; natural ſerioufneſs for help and deliverance; but never from natural to ſpiritual ſerioufneſs, ſo as to pray in a ſpiritual manner, for ſpiritual bleſſings, and wreſtle with God for the bleſſing: it is ſaid of the hypocrite, that *he doth not cry when God enjoins him.* See Dan. ix. 13. *All this evil is come upon us, yet made not we our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquity, and underſtand the truth.* And Hoſea vii. 7. *All their kings are fallen; yet there is none among them that calleth unto me.* When God makes our chief enjoyments fail, and yet we turn not to him by faith and prayer, is it a time of love? Nay, rather of wrath and anger. You may pray indeed, and yet be guilty of this here challenged, becauſe you pray not better than you did. If the Spirit of prayer was poured out upon us in affliction, it would be a ſign of love.

4. Such as under trouble have no more *hatred of ſin*, nor heart-parting with it, and heart-exerciſe about it, cannot ſay their time of trouble is a time of love.

Love to God grows with hatred of sin; but if you are no more burdened with sin than ever, your time of trouble hath not been a time of love. The troubles of God's people are to purge away the dross of sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. But if the bellows are burnt, and the metal consumed, and your iniquities not taken away farther from the heart, it is sad.

5. Such as under their trouble are brought to no more *love to God* and *duty*, so as to serve him better and more cordially in these duties, which before they either omitted, or slightly performed; if your service be as faulty as formerly, you come under that charge, *I have* so and so *smitten thee, but thou hast not returned unto me.*

6. Such as find not *Christ more sweet and precious* to them, by the means of their affliction: the bitterness of trouble never made Christ sweet to them, the grievousness of their trouble never made Christ precious to them. Is there the same strangeness between Christ and you that ever there was? No fellowship with him as your only help, and he in whom only God is well-pleased and reconciled? Then your time of trouble has not been a time of love. Alas! many wear off the sorrow of their affliction, partly by length of time, and partly by mirth and diversion, as Saul called for music to drive away the evil spirit; partly, by supply of comforts, yet remaining, and this lulls them asleep; but they know not what it is, like Hannah, to come to the Lord with a burdened spirit, and get ease from him; *They looked to him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed*, Psal. lxxxiv. 5.

Secondly, Let us consider this *positively*; the time of trouble and distress may be known to be a time of love. 1. More *generally*, by the gracious *effects* of a sanctified trouble. 2. More *particularly*, by considering the *particular troubles* we have been under, and their particular usefulness, through grace, to us.

1st, More *generally*. Try it by the gracious *effects* of a sanctified trouble. I shall mention some of these by which you may try yourselves,

1. If

1. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then your trouble has *humbled* you.—— God's deſign, by all the troubles in the wilderneſs, was to humble them, as well as to prove them, and do them good in the latter end; *Who fed thee in the wilderneſs with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter-end*, Deut. viii. 16. *Pride and folly is bound up in the hearts of the children of men, but the rod of correction drives it from them*, Prov. xxii. 15. He deſigns to hide pride from man, that he may *keep his ſoul from the pit*, Job xxxiii. 17, 18. We would be apt to ſay proudly with Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him*? if he did not humble and lay us low. But happy is the man whom affliction humbles to the duſt for the pride of his heart; humbles him to a meekneſs of ſpirit, and ſubmiſſion to his ſovereign will; humbles him to a ſight and acknowledgement of his ſin and wickedneſs, and of unknown corruption, to make him know what was in his heart, Deut. viii. 2. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. Humbles him to a renouncing all confidence in himſelf, in his own righteouſneſs, ſtrength, and wiſdom.

2. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then your trouble has *taught* and *inſtructed* you; *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt out of thy law*, Pſalm xciv. 12. Many a good leſſon he teaches his own at that ſchool; *Whom he loves, he chaſtens;* and whom he chaſtens in love, he teaches. He gives them many ſweet diſcoveries of himſelf; he ſhows them their weakneſs, and his power; their guiltineſs, and his righteouſneſs; their emptineſs, and his fulneſs; their baſeneſs, and his highneſs; their blackneſs, and his beauty; their folly, and his wiſdom; their treachery, and his faithfulneſs; their ſinfulneſs, and his holineſs; their miſery, and his mercy; their inſufficiency, and his all-ſufficiency, *&c.* What has he taught you by your trouble and affliction? Has he taught you the ſinfulneſs of ſin, that not only it brings evil, but is evil, an evil againſt God? Jerem. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſliding*

ing reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.—Has he taught you the *emptiness* of the creature, and the vanity thereof, that *all flesh is grass?* Isaiah xl. 6. You may have a strong imagination of this in your head, *that all flesh is grass*, but, have you so learned it as to have a deep impression of it on your heart?—Has he taught you the absolute *usefulness* of Christ, his fulness, worthiness, and suitableness?—— When the apostle is brought, Rom. vii. 24, 25. to an *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* then follows, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ:* here is my up-making; here is my help and deliverance; has the God of heaven famished all your gods of earth, and starved you as to creature-comforts, so as to make you hunger and thirst after the fulness, sweetness, and righteousness of Christ? Then your time of trouble has been a time of love.—Has he, by your trouble, taught you to *pray*, to weary of the earth, and to long for heaven, and to seek him early, and to seek him diligently, to seek him humbly, and to pour out your heart before him?—Has your trouble taught you what is the *one thing necessary*, and set you in quest of that, with David, Psalm xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life?*—Has your trouble taught you the *redemption of time?* In tranquility, many golden hours are lost; but has your trouble taught you to *redeem your time, because the days are evil?*—Has your time of trouble taught you to *improve your Bible*, as well as your time; to search it more diligently, to understand it more clearly, and to relish it more sweetly? *This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word has quickened me.*—Has your trouble taught you to *prepare for death* and *eternity*, by drawing out your soul toward an eternal God? You have heard of God before, but do you now see him? Moses never saw God so clearly as when he descended in a cloud; some never see God so clearly as when he descends in a black cloud of affliction: therein we may see his holi-

holineſs, in hating ſin; his juſtice, in correcting for ſin; his faithfulneſs to his covenant, Pſalm lxxxix. 30,——33.; his power in ſupporting; his mercy in comforting.

3. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then it has taught you to *forſake* ſin, ſaying, *What have I any more to do with idols? This is all the fruit to take away ſin.*—Has he taught you to *turn to himſelf*, and his way, (by hedging up your way with thorns, Hoſea ii. 6, 7.) ſaying, *I will go and return to my firſt huſband, for then it was better with me than now. It is good for me to draw near to God.*—Has he taught you to turn to *yourſelf*, and to your right ſenſes? Indeed, true converſion brings a man to his wits; it makes a change in the underſtanding, making him know, believe, and apprehend otherwiſe than he did: you before thought ſin but a ſport; but do you now underſtand it is the greateſt of evils? You imagined a glory in a preſent world; but do you now apprehend the emptineſs of it, and where true ſubſtantial comfort lies?—Has affliction awakened you out of your *dream*, ſo as you apprehend things to be quite otherwiſe than you took them to be in your ſleep? Converſion is a bringing a madman to himſelf, Luke xv. 17. The prodigal is ſaid to *come to himſelf:* true grace makes as great a change upon a man, as the reſtoring of a man to his wits does, Mark v. 15. It is like the man called LEGION, clothed, and ſitting at Chriſt's feet, and in his right mind. And, indeed, when a man comes to his right mind, he comes to a right carriage and countenance: we read of ſome, that the very ſhew of their countenances witneſſed againſt them: you will know ſome wicked men by their very outward countenance; for, ordinarily, a proud, haughty, and unhumbled air is about them; whereas the grave, heavenly, gentle and ſweet behaviour and countenance of God's people does ſometimes ſpeak out the habitation of the Spirit of Chriſt in their hearts, and will diſtinguiſh them from the hypocrite, that but affects outward gravity.——When a man comes to his right

right mind, then he comes to a right *language*, the language of heaven, instead of the language of Ashdod; the earthly mind speaks earthly things natively; but the heavenly-minded man speaks heavenly things as natively; for, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* A new heart gives a man a new *tongue;* a new heart brings him to new company, and makes him give up with his old, idle, graceless companions, and affect fellowship with them who fear God. A new heart brings him to a new *walk*, and conversation in heaven. It is true, the external change is less discernable in these who have been civilly and religiously educated; yet there is even as great a difference between that man before and after conversion, though he was never so civil before, as there is between art and nature, or between some old art, he learned at the schools, and a new nature, he has got from God.

4. If your time of trouble has been a time of love, then your trouble brought you to *submit* to trouble, and chearfully to welcome it as God's send; especially if it shall accomplish God's gracious design, to welcome it kindly as coming from his hand, especially if he himself come along with it: this is called a receiving it at the hand of God; Job ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God? and shall we not receive evil?* We kindly receive good at his hand, and every good thing we received, we ought to have acknowledged the hand of God in giving it, and so ought we to receive evil: for example, affliction and trouble is God's thunder to awaken secure sinners; now, do you welcome it with this view, and for this end? "Lord, let me, by this means, be awakened "out of security, and quickened to call upon thee?" —Affliction is God's *forge* and furnace to soften hard hearts, and to refine base metal: do you welcome affliction coming on this errand? saying, "Now, Lord, "let my hard heart be broken; let me be purged and "purified, and come forth as gold."—Affliction is God's *pruning-knife*, for lopping off luxuriant branches; do you welcome affliction, providing it has this errand? saying, "Lord, let me be pruned and purged;

"if

" if by this means I may bring forth more fruit."—Affliction is God's *ſchool*, where he diſciplines his children, that they may learn obedience by the things they ſuffer: do you welcome affliction on this errand? ſaying, " May I receive correction, and be made an obe-" dient child to my heavenly Father, and have evi-" dence of my being not a baſtard, but a true child " of God. No matter what be the affliction thou or-" ders, if thereby I be a partaker of thy holineſs."—Affliction is God's *winnowing wind*, or fan, to unchaff his corn, that it may be fit for his garner: do you welcome it as coming on this errand? ſaying, " Lord, " let my chaff be blown away, even all the chaff of " my pride, unbelief, worldlineſs, and carnality, *&c.*" —Affliction is God's *eye-ſalve*, for clearing the ſight of his people, that they may ſee things to be what they are: now, do you welcome affliction, if it may accompliſh this end? Saying, with Job, in his affliction, chap. xxxiv. 32. " *That which I know not teach thou me;* " *ſhow me wherefore thou contendeſt;* tell me what is " the quarrel and ground of controverſy; and *if I* " *have done iniquity, let me do ſo no more.* What I know " not of God, O teach thou me! What I know not " about myſelf; what I know not about Chriſt, and " the myſteries of the kingdom of grace, or about the " myſteries of the kingdom of providence, teach me; " make me know thy way that is in the ſanctuary, " and thy way that is in the ſea."

2*dly*, We now proceed more *particularly*, to conſider the *particular times* of trouble we have met with in our life-time, and whether or not theſe have been times of trouble to us. The text leads me to obſerve our particular times, *Thy time was a time of love;* thy time, who art the favoured and beloved of God.—— What time are theirs? The text allows me to ſpeak of any time that has paſt over thy head, and enquire if it has been a time of love, of ſpecial love, I ſhall therefore ſpeak a little, 1. Of ſome particular *periods* of your time. 2. Of ſome particular *trials* and *troubles* of your time, and enquire if they have been a time of love. As to the

[1.] The particular *periods* of your time; such as you are, or shall be capable to discern, are, the times of *youth*, the time of *middle-age*, the time of *old age*, and the time of *death*; and I would offer you a word of trial concerning each of these. By these we may be led to reflect upon the time of love either past, present, or to come in this world.

(1.) There is the time of YOUTH, that is over with some, and present with others, and would you know if your time of youth has been a time of love? Here let young persons consider what is present, and older persons consider what is past: and both try if their time of youth is, or has been, a time of love. Alas! I fear few have it to say; because the most part spend their youth in childish trifles and vanities, little better than catching butterflies. But if there be any here, whose time of youth has been a time of love, it may be known by these four scriptural marks.

1. Have you been made to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, according to the commandment of God, Eccles. xii. 1.?——Have you been brought to a serious rememberance of God your Creator, God your Redeemer; and to remember him so as to love him above all things? For God has a kindly remembrance of young kindness; *Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals*, Jerem. ii. 2. To remember him so as to seek him above all things; for God says, *I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.*

2. Have you been made to remember the *day of judgment* in the day of your youth? according to that advertisement, Eccl. xi. 9. *Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* Have you been brought to know, that for all the sins of your youth, God will call you to judgment? Have you got the humbling knowledge of it so as you have born the yoke of humiliation

miliation in your youth? Lam. iii. 27. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* Have you got the upſtirring knowledge of it, ſo as to make you reſtleſs till you was reconciled with the judge, and got your judge to be your friend; God himſelf to be your God in Chriſt?

3. Have you been at the *ſchool* with young Timothy, of whom it is ſaid, 2 Tim. iii. 15. That *from a child he knew the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make you wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*? Theſe whoſe time of youth has been a time of love, are verily the ſtudents of the ſcriptures, and of the mind of God therein.

4. Have you been *affected* with the word, as young Joſiah was? of whom it is ſaid, 2 Kings xxii. 19. That *his heart was tender, and he humbled himſelf before the Lord, when he heard the word of threatening* read againſt Jeruſalem? *To this man will I look*, young or old, *even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and that trembled at my word.* Did the word of threatening touch your heart with fear; and the word of promiſe touch your heart with love, delight, and deſire? And does this work of God upon your heart continue, though not always at the ſame height, and exerciſe, yet thro' all the ſtages of your after-life, and perſevere to a progreſs in the way of the Lord, and acquaintance with him? For ſome begin with the Spirit and end with the fleſh; they ſeem to begin their days in heaven, and end them in hell: but where it is a ſound work of God, it is durable; *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* By theſe things you may try if your time of youth is, or has been, a time of love.

(2.) There is a time of MIDDLE-AGE, that is preſent with ſome of you, and over with others; will you try if that is, or has been, a time of love. Indeed, if your time of youth has been a time of love, then your time, or riper years, will be ſo too; for, *Whom the Lord loves, he loves to the end.*——But more particularly,

1. If your time of ripers years be, or has been a time of love, then you have got grace to lament the *folly of your youth*, saying, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm lxxix. 8. *O remember not againſt us former iniquities.* ——As you have been convinced of the ſin of your nature, heart, and way, ſo you have been particularly challenged for, and made to go heavily under the burden of the ſins of your youth. Job was brought to ſay, chap. xiii. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth.* Was never the ſin of your youth bitter to you before the Lord, and made you cry, with David, Pſalm xxv. 7. *Remember not the ſin of my youth?* If you can look back upon the follies of your youth with pleaſure, and are never humbled before God for them, know that a ſin never imbittered, is a ſin never pardoned; ſin never hated, is ſin never purged: but if thy time of riper years, be a time of love, it will be a time of hating ſin, and of hating thyſelf for all ſin, and even the follies of thy youth, which others make a ſport of, as being nothing but the tricks of youth. *God will not be mocked.*

2. If thy time of riper years be a time of love, it will be a time of *ripening for eternity*, by redeeming the time that is paſt in idleneſs, wickedneſs, and folly; according to the call of God, Epheſ. xv. 16. *See then that you walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time.* If you never began to redeem time, you never yet have had a time of love. O ſlighter and contemner of time, that knows not what to do with thy time, that idles and trifles it away, and has little or no remorſe what time thou miſpendeſt in idle work, idle talk, idle converſation, idle company; thou knoweſt nothing of a time of love; for time's redemption begins with it. And now, that thou are come to thy middle-age, it is full time to redeem time, as thou wouldſt not be plunged unawares into eternity.

3. If thy time of riper years be, or has been a time of love, then it will be your deſire and endeavour to give that *ſtrength of time* and days to God, and his ſervice, that others give to the devil, and their luſts.—The time of middle-age is a time of ſervice amongſt men,

men, then they are most fit for temporal service in their day and generation: even so, if we be servants to God at all, that time of life is most fit and proper for glorifying, and honouring, and doing something for his glory, and the good of our own souls, and the souls of others, and accordingly will be thus occupied, if our time in that period be a time of love: for, as his time of love begets love, since *we loved him, because he first loved us;* so, accordingly to the measure of our love, such will be the measure of our service with delight, from a principle of love. There may be a variety of changes in the measure and manner of this loving service: but this will be the habitual business of the man's life, whose time is a time of love, then it will be a time of service; and, as Jacob's love for Rachel made his service pleasant, much more will the love of Christ constrain to serve him.

4. If thy time of riper years be a time of love, then it will be a *growing time;* as you grow in years so will you *grow in grace*, and *in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Peter iii. 18. This will hold true of all the children of grace, notwithstanding of all their winter decayings, yet they have also their spring-times of reviving and restoration, vastly different from all the changes of frames and moods that may be among hypocrites; for, when the Lord restores his children's frame, he together with it, *restores their soul*, and *leads them in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake*, Psalm xxiii. 3. And there they walk and go on in the *strength of the Lord*, and from *strength to strength, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God*—Thus you may try if the time of your middle-age be a time of love.

(3.) There is the time of OLD-AGE that some are brought to. You that are come to it will you try if your time of old-age be a time of love? In order to your trial, you may tell me,

1. What is the *sorrow* of your old-age? Is the sin of your youth, and of your riper age, the sorrow and grief of your age? Is it your sorrow and grief before God that so much time has been lost, so many opportunities

tunities misimproven, and so little good has been got and done by you? May you not say with Jacob to Pharaoh, Genesis xlvii. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been?* Do you reckon you have lived no longer than since you began to live unto God? Is it your grief that you have lived so little from him as your principle, and to him as your end, and that you lived so long without him?

2. What is the *joy* of your old-age? If it be a time of love, then as sin will be the grief, so Christ will be the joy of your old-age: when your joy and comfort in the world is withering and dying. Is your joy in the Lord Jesus beginning to live? *They are the true circumcision, that rejoice in Christ Jesus.* Sorrow for sin, and joy in Christ the Saviour, are very consistent; yea, true sorrow for sin, cannot be without joy in the Lord; and true joy in the Lord, cannot be without sorrow for sin: and if this be your sorrow and your joy in old-age, it is a time of love.

3. What is the *crown* of your old-age? Solomon says, Prov. xvi. 31. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.* Is the righteousness of Christ your crown? Is righteousness his imputed for your justification, your crown to cover you before God? Is his righteousness of grace imputed for your sanctification, your crown for adorning you, and making you all glorious within, and being the principle of holiness and righteousness of life and conversation before men? Is this the crown of your old-age: And is Christ himself your crown, as *the Lord your righteousness and strength.*

4. What is the *staff* of your old-age? Is the word of grace and promise the staff you lean upon for support and comfort in all your tribulations and difficulties; Do you walk and worship with this staff: as *Jacob worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff,* in a common sense, Heb. xi. 21.; so do you worship, leaning on the staff of the divine promise. And are you resolved to walk through death with this staff, saying, *Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and staff*

they

they comfort me? Pſalm xxiii. 4. Has God put this ſtaff in your hand, and you reſolve never to quit with it, but ſtill to lean upon his word, and hope in his word? If ſo, it is a time of love.

(4.) There is the time of DEATH a-coming; and would you know whether that will be a time of love? Some go to the devil, or his inſtruments, to know what death they will die; but if you go to God, and his word, you may know indeed what death you will die, I mean, whether you will die in the favour of God, or if your time of death ſhall be a time of love. Would you know what will come of you at death, and how it will fare with you? Whether you will fall in the lap of God's everlaſting love, or fall into the fire of his everlaſting wrath, when death comes, which may be nigh at hand? Why,

1. A time of love in life will certainly *end* in a time of love at death; for *death* cannot ſeparate from the *love of God*, once manifeſted, Rom. viii. 38. If you be ſure then of a time of love now, whether in youth, or riper age, or old age, you may be ſure that the time of death will be a time of love alſo; for, *He reſts in his love.*

2. And more particularly, if Chriſt be your life now, Col. iii. 3, 4. *Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.* If to *you to live is Chriſt*, then to *die will be gain*, Phil. i. 21. Is Chriſt the hope of your life, the joy of your life, the ſtrength of your life, the glory of your life, the Alpha and Omega of your life? Have you come to him for life? And do you live on him as your life? And do you reckon your life without him, to be but death? Then your time of death will be a time of love.

3. If Chriſt be in you by his *Spirit*, then the time of death will be a time of love: for this is the *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* But if you have the Spirit of Chriſt, he will *abide with you for ever*, John xiv. 16. This is the earneſt of the inheritance, as he is a ſanctifying and comforting Spirit;

rit; a Spirit of prayer and praiſe; a Spirit of grace and love, a Spirit of faith and of a ſound mind.

4. Your time of death will be a time of love, if the *ſting of death* be taken away by the *Lamb of God, who takes away the ſin of the world.* Now, is ſin taken away in the guilt and rule of it? How ſhall I know that, ſay you? Why, do you flee to Chriſt for *pardon* of ſin, as he is the *Lord your righteouſneſs?* And do you flee to Chriſt for *victory* over ſin as he is the *Lord your ſtrength?* And do you ever win to rejoice in his pardoning grace, having ſome peace of conſcience in the faith of his atoning blood? And do you ever win to rejoice in his victorious grace, having ſome begun victory, and ſome hope of full victory over ſin? Why then, according to the meaſure of this freedom from ſin, which is the ſting of death, ſuch may be the meaſure of your aſſurance, that the time of death will be a time of love; and you may ſing in the view of it with Paul, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,* 1 Cor. xv. 55. If you know none of theſe things in any meaſure, you then have no ground, as yet, to conclude but that your time of death will be a time of wrath, and a porch to eternal death.

[2.] As to the next thing, *viz.* the particular *troubles* and *trials* of your time, by which you may try the *time of love:* I cannot now inſiſt upon them; I only mention theſe two at the time.

1. Perhaps your time, at preſent, is a time of *fear* and *perplexity* about your STATE, not knowing if it be a ſtate of *grace;* fearing you know nothing of communion with God, or of the power of religion; and you would underſtand, if it is poſſible that ſuch a time may be a *time of love,* and how it may be known? Why,

(1.) Some of the Lord's people may have communion with God, and experience of the power of godlineſs, and yet not be *aſſured* of it, becauſe they have not that meaſure of it they would deſire to have.—It is communion with God, when you have a *dealing* with

with God, and God with you; when you ask, and he gives; you knock, and he sometimes opens a door of liberty unto you.—There is somewhat of the power of religion, when at times you find your *indisposition* for duty, and that you can no more pray than remove a mountain; yet, behold quickly the Lord looses your bonds, turns your darkness to light, your hard heart to a soft heart; and you pour it out like water; here is the finger of God; and these things demonstrate a *time of love*, an interest in God, acquaintance with him, fellowship with him, and the power of his way, though you discern it not.

(2.) Is thy fear in this matter not a *lazy*, *idle* fear, but an *active*, *diligent* fear, stirring thee up to be about the Lord's hand, and his way? Some have an idle concern: they are easy though they know not their state; they reckon it only the privilege of some, and attainable by few; and therefore no matter though they have it not. This looks like a total want of the knowledge of God and his way. But does your concern make you diligent? and are you as humble, holy, and circumspect in your darkness, as others are in their light of assurance? There is *hope in Israel concerning thee*, that *thy time is a time of love*, notwithstanding thy darkness.

2. Perhaps your time of particular trouble is a time of *heaviness* with respect to temporal calamities. I shall say no more of this at the time, but to refer you to Psal. lvii. 1. What is your *refuge* in a day of *calamity*? If your time of calamity be a time of love, then such will be your exercise. Two things take place in all God's children in times of calamity, if faith be any way exercised; and in none else but them.

(1.) They have a *refuge*, and God only is their refuge; they are obliged to abandon all other refuges; and though they may use means, as well as others, yet they have no other refuge but God, that they run to, as Psal. cxliii. 9. *I flee to thee to hide me*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, I HIDE ME WITH THEE. They have no other refuge but the secret of God's presence, and

the ſhadow of his wings: they are brought off from all confidence in themſelves, and in the creatures.

(2.) They are humbled to be *content* with a *refuge* without a *delivery*; even though the day of calamity be not over, yet they can rejoice in their refuge, till the day of calamity overpaſs. They can rejoice in God, as a promiſer, even when he is not yet a performer; and reſt on a promiſe, without a performance; in a refuge, without a delivery.——Try if you know any thing of this, and if your time of *trouble* has been a time of *love*.

SERMON XCIII.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.

[The fourth Sermon on this Text.]

BETWEEN the time of *life*, and the time of *death*, our concern ſhould be, that a *time of love* interveen. Solomon ſpeaks of a *time to be born*, and a *time to die*; intimating, that there is no time to *live*, that we can promiſe upon; and therefore, between our birth and our death, our main care ſhould be to have a time of love; for, if death prevent us before we know *that*, wo will be to us that ever we were born. As fire kindles fire, and one flame lightens another; ſo, nothing more reaſonably demands love, than love; and no love ſo powerfully commands love again, as the love of God: our love cannot but be beſt laid out npon one who is ſo far before-hand with us, that even, before time, prevented us: he provided for our cure, before ever we had received our wounds; for our healing, before we had contracted our diſeaſes; for our deli-

deliverance, before we had been ruined; for our redemption, before we were in thraldom; for our rising, before we were fallen; and for our advancement to heaven, before we were become heirs of hell. Thus was our kind Redeemer *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* The time wherein he vents his love is strange, even the time when we are most worthy of his wrath, and unworthy of his love.

In the preceding discourse, we mentioned two evidences, to know if the particular *troubles* and *trials* of our time were *times of love.* We intend at present to inlarge a little further upon this point. Try then if your *time of need* be his *time of love*, since infinite wisdom uses to make these two meet in the experiences of his own people, whose time in this world is a time of tribulation, wherein yet he has said, *In me ye shall have peace.* What *time of need* is it with you? Why, say you,

1. "My time is a time of *want*, even of outward "want and poverty. I have very hard living in the "world; and can such a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. Yea, it may be a time of love, if your want and poverty be weaning you from the world, and wining you to Christ, in whom is all store of provision; and if you be living upon his promise and providence. Know you what it is to live upon such a promise as that, Isa. xxxiii. 16. *Bread shall be given him, and his water shall be sure?* Have you got the faith of his providence, that he *feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies;* and therefore you rely upon him for provision, though you should be kept, as it were, from hand to mouth? Christ says to the church of Smyrna, *I know thy poverty; but thou art rich*, Rev. ii. 9. It may be said of some, Christ knows their riches, but they are poor, not having Christ for their stock and store: but happy they of whom he says, *I know thy poverty; but thou art rich;* rich in faith, rich in grace: however poor in hand, yet they are rich in bond, by virtue of the bond of the covenant, wherein they have Christ bound for their support in a present world.——If you know any thing of this,

your time may be a time of *want*, and yet a *time of love*.

2. " But, says another, my time is a time of *inward* " *want, spiritual want;* want of faith, and want of " grace; and can such a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. It may be so, if you are *humbled* under a sense of your want, and really see your want and poverty in spiritual things, you may reckon the Lord thinks upon you with *thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an unexpected end. I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinks upon me*, Psalm xl. 17. Yea, you may reckon that the Lord looks towards you with an eye of pity, *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*, Isaiah lxxi. 2.——And again, if your want and poverty *commends* Christ and his fulness to you; *To them that believe he is precious:* and even to them who believe their own want and his fulness; who believe their utter insufficiency, and his infinite all-sufficiency; who believe they are nothing, and he is all in all.—If you be kept empty, and sensible of your utter want, so as to have no confidence in yourselves, or in the flesh, and hence find no cause of rejoicing, but only in Christ, and his fulness, and dependent upon that, your time of want is a time of love. *Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, Matth. v. 3.

3. Say you, " My time is a time of *guilt;* I have a " sense of much guilt lying upon my conscience; and " can that be a time of love, which is a time of the " prevalency of sin, and the pressure of guilt?"

ANSW. It may be a time of love in the following cases—If the prevalency of sin be *humbling* you to the dust, saying, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?*—If the pressure of guilt be leading you to the *fountain* of Christ's blood for cleansing.—If the *pardon* of sin be highly valued by you, above all things in this world, saying, *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*——And if at any time the sense of pardon, or the hope of pardon, *melt* your heart, and make you fear to offend any more, and

afraid

afraid of falling into sin, and lead you to say, *Henceforth we will not go back; quicken us, and we will call upon thy name*, Psal. lxxx. 18.—Do you get any grace to *hate* sin, and to resolve a *war* against it? grace to *hope* for victory at last, though you should fight all your life? And are you made sometimes to *fight* in hope of full victory through Christ, saying, *I thank God, thro' Jesus Christ.*——In this case, thy time of *sensible guilt*, and of the prevalency of sin, may notwithstanding be a *time of love.*

4. Say you, "My time is a time of *weakness*; I find "no strength for duty, no ability for work or wor- "ship that God calls me to; and can that be a time "of love?"

ANSW. Why, even that time may be proven to be a time of love.——If the sense of thy weakness drives thee *out of thyself* to the strength and sufficiency of Christ, saying with the apostle, *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5.—Do you know, when you are *weak in yourselves*, then to be *strong in the Lord; strong in the grace that is in Christ*?—When you find in yourselves no grace to *pray*, yet even then have you gone to prayer, and found strength before you was aware, so as you could say, *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me, with strength in my soul*, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. I found my soul weak and without strength; but when I began to try in that case, he strengthened me with his secret power, his invisible hand.—Did you find, that he who brings *light out of darkness*, brought strength out of weakness? And is your weakness sometimes the *occasion* of magnifying and setting off the strength of Christ? according to 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace shall be sufficient for you, and my strength shall be perfect in thy weakness.*—And are you thence sometimes made to *glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you*? and content that your stock of strength is not in your own hand, but in Christ's? *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.*——In this case, your time of *weakness* may be a *time of love.*

5. "Per-

5. "Perhaps your time is a time of *difficulty*, about "some piece of work, some step of your pilgrimage, "wherein you know not what to do; can such a time "be a time of love?"

ANSW. Yea, it may, in the following cases. Are you getting grace to spread the case *before the Lord*, to acquaint him with your case, according to that call, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy steps?*—Do you *commit* the guiding of your ways to him, according to that, Psal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy ways to the Lord; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass?* Though you see *no light*, nothing but darkness, it is a sign he will direct according to his promise; *I will lead the blind in ways they know not; and in paths which they have not trode.*—Are you *waiting* on him for his promised conduct, according to that promise; *They shall hear a voice behind them saying, This is the way walk ye in it?* Thy time of *difficulty* is a *time of love; He will guide thee with his eye.*

6. Say you, "My time is a time of great *affliction;* affliction on my body, affliction on my soul, affliction in my family; how shall I know if this time "of affliction be a time of love?"

ANSW. It is so in the following cases. Are you helped to *cast your burden on the Lord*, to roll this case upon him?—Do you see the *wisdom* of God in afflicting you, the *holiness* of God, the *faithfulness* of God, the *mercy* and *love* of God in your affliction? Do you see his *name?*—Are you brought to *submit* to God, and put yourself in his hand, to lay the rod on your back as he pleases, if it be needful? And especially to look to him for *sanctifying* the rod, and concerned rather to have affliction sanctified, than removed, saying, O let the wind blow, till my chaff be blown away; let the fire burn, till my dross be purged out, *&c.*—Thy time of *affliction* is a *time of love.*

7. "Oh! but my time, say you, is a time of *rebellion* and *incorrigibleness;* tho' I have been afflicted, "yet I am not the better; I find my heart rebelling "against his chastisements; and that though *he hides* "*himself*, and *smites*, yet *I go on frowardly in the way* "*of*

" *of my heart*, as it is said, Isa. lvii. 17. I find cor-
" ruption irritated by the cross, and enmity strong; can
" such a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. It may be terrible, indeed, to think of thy rebellion against word and rod; yet thy time notwithstanding all this may be a *time of love*; if thy enmity be afflicting to thee, and thou heavily lamentest it before the Lord, saying, " Lord, thou seest nothing will
" do with me; no word, no rod; such is the power
" of sin and enmity: nothing but a sovereign step of
" grace will overcome me; therefore, *See my ways*,
" *and heal me*, in a way of sovereign grace:" And dost thou therefore cast thyself down at the throne of sovereign grace, that thou mayest be conquered, pitied, and saved in this way? Art thou complaining of thy enmity before God, and of thy incorrigibleness, and waiting upon God for more and more of his power exerted for destroying it, and delivering thee? *There is hope in Israel concerning thee*, that thy time is a *time of love; he will see thy ways, and heal thee.*

But, say you, " My time is a time of *divine absence*
" and *anger*; I think the Lord has cast me off; and
" can such a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. Yea, it may be a *time of love*, notwithstanding these apprehensions of thine: if in this case thou art endeavouring, through grace, to look to the temple of God, saying, with Jonah, chap. iii. 4. *I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again to thy holy temple.*—Art thou *out of the belly of hell crying to God*; and *against hope believing in hope*, looking and longing for the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and a reviving in the bondage?—And while he is absent and angry, can you say, *The desire of your soul is to his name?* A believer at his lowest, may be known by his hidden and holy desire.

QUEST. *When is the desire holy?*

ANSW. 1. When you desire to be *justified*, that you may be *sanctified*; or to be *pardoned*, that you may be *purified*. 2. When you desire to be *saved*, that God may be *glorified*; or to have *happiness*, that God may have *honour*.

Again,

Again, try the *time of love* by the REMARKABLENESS of that time. And here I would offer two things, for helping your trial. 1. The remarkable *parts*. 2. The remarkable *attendants* or *properties* of the time of love.

1*ſt*, Try the remarkable PARTS of it; I mean, 1. The *commencement*, or morning of it. 2. The *progreſs*, or mid-day, of the time of love; for it never has an evening.

1. One of the remarkable *parts* of it is the *commencement* thereof; preparatively, by the law; effectively, by the goſpel.

(1.) *Preparatively*, by the law; giving a view of ſin, and the wrath of God for ſin; for people never value the revelation of the love of God in the goſpel, unleſs they have got a revelation of the wrath of God in the law: has ever *the commandment come*? Was you ever brought to the foot of Sinai, and there got you a diſcovery of your ſin and guilt, and of the wrath of God you deſerve, making you tremble, and fear hell and damnation, ſaying, *Oh! what ſhall I do?* I cannot live, and I dare not die: *what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Have you come under the ſpirit of bondage and conviction?

(2.) *Effectively*, by the goſpel; the law breaks the hard heart, but the goſpel melts it. A ſtone duly broken, may be ſtill a hard ſtone: but the goſpel melts, the Sun of righteouſneſs diſſolves, and that partly, by the *revelation* of mercy to the ſinful, guilty creature; partly, by the particular *offer* of mercy; here is mercy for you, a Chriſt for you, ſalvation for you, that deſerved damnation; O this melts! And partly, by the *Spirit* of faith, given to fall in with the goſpel, and receive Chriſt for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*, and to inliſt with Jeſus Chriſt.——Then the *time of love* is commenced in the ſoul.

2. The other remarkable *part* of the *time of love*, is the *progreſs* thereof. The time of love is continued, and the deſign of love carried on more and more. And that,

(1.) By

(1.) By *teaching* ordinances; as *faith comes by hearing*; so the *increase* of faith by hearing more and more.

(2.) By *sealing* ordinances, and solemn occasions; they see his *power and glory in the sanctuary*; get *here a little and there a little*. And,

(3.) By *crosses* and *judgments*; for, *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is the fruit of all, to take away sin. It was good for me that I was afflicted, for now I have learned thy law.*

(4.) By *mercies* outward and inward; they are brought to *fear the Lord and his goodness*; get new discoveries of his glory from time to time; new communications of his grace, new restorations after decays; *He restoreth my soul*; and new conversions, as it is said to Peter, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*; and David, *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; then will I teach transgressors thy way.* They get new excitations and upstirrings; new drawings, new quickenings, new gales of the Spirit. By these means the time of love is continued, even to the believer's sense now and then; and the design of love carried on.——This is the *progress* thereof.

2*dly*, Try the *time of love* by the remarkable *attendants* and *properties* thereof.

(1.) Try it by the remarkable ATTENDANTS of it. I only mention two of them.

1. It is attended with remarkable *power*, Psal. cx. 3. The *time of love* is called a *day of power*; but how can this power be remarked? Why, how do we remark the power of God in the works of creation, but by the effects thereof in the visible heavens, sun, moon, and stars? so, how do we remark the power of God in the work of grace, but by this effect thereof, *our being made willing*? The invisible power of God may be known by this effect.——But many say, they are willing, who are not truly so.

QUEST. *When is one made truly willing?*

ANSW. There are four properties of true willingness.

(1.) It is a *pleasant* willingness, not constrained by terror or dread only; but made freely willing, plea-

ſantly willing. And this pleaſant willingneſs hath two things in it, joy and generoſity. It has *joy* in it; the man is glad to *ſell all, that he may buy the pearl.* It has *generoſity* in it; he would give a wolrd for Chriſt; nay, a thouſand worlds for him, had he them at his command.

(2.) It is a *preſent* willingneſs; the man goes in preſently to the call, according to that, *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation.* Many are content of Chriſt for the future, and they delay till ſome other time; but they are not for Chriſt's being a preſent portion: it is otherwiſe with ſuch who are made willing.

(3.) It is a *peremptory* willingneſs: the ſoul ſays, O! I *muſt* have Chriſt; I cannot want him; I cannot live without him; I cannot die without him; I periſh without him: give me Chriſt, or elſe I die.

(4.) It is an *univerſal* willingneſs; the ſoul is made willing to have Chriſt for ſanctification, as well as righteouſneſs; to be ſaved from ſin, as well as from wrath; to have Chriſt and his croſs, as well as Chriſt and his crown.

2. It is attended with remarkable *light* and *knowledge*, 2 Corinth. iv. 6. Try then your time of love by its being a time of light, and ſaving knowledge.—And this knowledge is remarkable for theſe four properties.

(1.) It is a *down caſting* knowledge and light; *The loftineſs of man is brought low, and the Lord alone exalted*, Iſaiah ii. 11. Other knowledge and learning puffeth up; the more a man has of it, he is the more proud: but this knowledge caſts him down to the duſt, down to the ground; it caſts down ſelf, and ſelf-righteouſneſs, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſeeking.

(2.) It is an *up-lifting* knowledge; it exalts Chriſt in the heart, and lifts up the heart in the ways of the Lord, in reſpect of ſatisfaction; it brings in ſatisfaction to the heart and conſcience: this water being given, the man *thirſts no more*, in reſpect of abſolute want,

want, John iv. 14.——Nothing satisfies him but this knowledge of Christ; or, rather this Christ made known.

(3.) It is a *singular* knowledge; singular in respect of the object, author, and subject.——The *object* is a God in Christ; whatever men know, if they know not God, in Christ, they are miserable; though they had all scriptural knowledge, if they want the knowledge of Christ, *It may be said of them, they know nothing as they ought to know.* In paradise, there were many trees, and every one good; but only *one tree of life:* in the scriptures, many truths, and all good; but there is only one tree of life there; and we perish, if we eat not that.—The *Author* of this knowledge is God; *Flesh and blood has not revealed these things to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.*—The *subjects* are ordinarily poor *babes*, who have neither wisdom nor prudence, in respect of others in the world; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes*, Mat. xi. 25. Some are capable of this knowledge of Christ, that are not capable of other learning.—A wooden candlestick can hold a candle as well as a silver one; so are these capable of the knowledge of Christ, that are destitute of outward ornaments and literature.

(4.) It is a *warming* and *working* light and knowledge. We know so much of God and Christ, as we are affected, touched, and wrought upon. It is said, Jer. ii. 8. *They that handle the law, know not God.*—— Some may handle the law, and yet not know God; they may handle the gospel, and yet not know Christ, by his special, singular, and saving knowledge: they may have a vast deal of head knowledge; but a spark in the heart is worth a torch in the brain. The knowledge of Christ feeds all graces. It feeds *faith: They that know his name will put their trust in him.* It feeds *repentance; They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* It feeds *love;* they only who know him to be *altogether lovely, do truly love him.* It feeds *all* grace; strengthening all grace.——Examine this

knowledge, and be sure you find the difference between it and the *form of knowledge*, which never warms the heart, or works any change in you: it is but like the sun painted upon a board for a sign; you call it a sun, but it has no sun-light, no sun-influence, no sun-warmth; so you may call that the knowledge of Christ, which hypocrites and profane graceless men may have; you may call it knowledge, but it is but a *form*, a shadow, a picture: there is nothing of the light, heat, and influence that will take place when you come to the true light.——Examine yourself by these things.

[2.] There are some remarkable PROPERTIES of the *time of love*, by which you may try.

1. It is a time of remarkable *joy* and *sorrow*; sorrowing for sin, and yet rejoicing in the Lord: *They shall come with weeping; and with supplications I will lead them;* or with FAVOUR, Jer. xxxi. 9. He leads them with weeping, and with singing; weeping, for their sins; and singing, for his favours. The *time of love* is called, Song ii. 11. *a time of the singing of birds, and the voice of the turtle;* which, applied to the believer, is his mournful notes. It is remarkable, that the book of Lamentations is all poetical: every chapter, except the third, has twenty-two verses; and every verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the first verse with the first letter, *Aleph*; the second verse, with the second letter, *Beth*; and so on to the close: and the third chapter has sixty-six verses, and every three verses begins with a letter thereof, three times over; the first three verses begins with the first letter, three times over; the second three verses, beginning with the second letter, three times over, and so on. What is the meaning of all this, but to show, that a time of mourning and lamentation may be to the Lord's people a time of mirth and holy music? And ordinarily it is so: and when hath the believer more joy than when in a flood of tears before the Lord?

2. It is a time of *prayer*; and very remarkable for it.

QUEST.

QUEST. *What is there remarkable in the prayers of thefe, whofe time is a time of love?*

ANSW. There are two remarkable outpourings, *viz.* the outpouring of the *Spirit*, mentioned, Zech. xii. 10.; and the outpouring of the *heart*, mentioned, Pfalm lxii. 8. When thefe two concur, then it difcovers a *time of love*. At other times prayer comes drop by drop, as water out of a ftill; but then it comes plentifully as water out of a fountain. See Ifaiah. xxvi. 16.

3. It is a time of *praife*; the heart is filled with the *high praifes of God*. And this heart exercife takes in both admiration and invitation: *admiration*; O wonder! fays the foul, that ever God manifefted his love to the like of me, *What am I, or my father's houfe? Invitation*, to all the creatures to help them to praife; *O let fun, moon, and ftars praife him.* This feems to be the temper of the heavenly harpers in their halelujahs, *Praife ye the Lord*; importing, that they cannot praife him; therefore let all the creation help us to praife; *Praife ye the Lord.*

4. It is a time of *love*, a loving time; for love manifefted begets love; the love of God kindles love in us in the time of love: and it is remarkable in two things. The love that refults from the manifefting of divine love, gives, *firft* the HEART; and *fecondly* the HAND to the Son of God.—The HEART; *My fon, give me thy heart.* Many fay they love Chrift, and yet give their heart to the world, and to their luffs; but as Delilah faid to Samfon, Judg. xvi. 15. *How canft thou fay, that thou loveft me, when thy heart is not toward me?* So, how can you fay, that you love Chrift, when your heart is not toward him, but given away to other lovers? If Chrift be your treafure, your heart will be fet upon him.—Again, the HAND is given to him, to ferve and work for him: we read of the *labour of love.* As Jacob ferved for love to Rachel, fo the love of Chrift conftrains to his fervice; *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* It is true, the believer's heart may frequently mifgive him, and then he draws away his hand too; but this is not acted like a believer; this is his

burden

burden and diſeaſe; and he is never himſelf till his heart and hand be both given to the Son of God.—— Try yourſelf by theſe things.

We ſhall now ſhut up our preſent exerciſe, with a ſhort *addreſs* to you whoſe *time*, either formerly has been, or at preſent is a *time of love*. And our *advice* to you is, O *render unto the Lord, love for love*. And to induce you hereunto.

1. Conſider, how *abſolutely free*, *unmerited*, and *undeſerved* his love was to you. There was nothing that could induce him to love you: every thing about you was wretchedneſs and miſery, as we endeavoured to ſhew in tracing the connexion where our text lies. You was *lying in your blood*, *no eye to pity you*: and yet, in theſe deplorable circumſtances, in his paſſing by, *Behold, your time was a time of love*. It was ſaid of Mary, that ſhe *loved much*, *becauſe much was forgiven her*. Well, ſee that you love the Lord more than ever, becauſe much iniquity hath been forgiven you, and much love conferred upon you. *Thy time was a time of love*.

2. Conſider, in order to perſwade you to render him *love for love*, that he was *before-hand* in his love towards you: his love prevented yours: and if it had not been ſo, your *time* could never have been a *time of love*.— Therefore, ſays the apoſtle, *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us*, 1 John iv. 19. Let the priority of his love to you, influence you to love him. *Behold, thy time was a time of love!*

3. Conſider, what an *agreeable* and *comfortable time* your *time of love was*, when he brought you into the *banquetting houſe*, and diſplayed his *banner of love over you*. When you was enjoying theſe love-calls, love-viſits, love-tokens, love-looks, and feaſting upon the loving-kindneſs of God; how was your ſoul raviſhed with his love! Were you not made to cry out, *O the height, the breadth, the depth, and the length of the love of God!* Should not this then be a powerful motive to engage you to render him *love for love?* And, is it not the beſt way to have his love-interviews continued with

with you? *O love the Lord, all ye his saints. Keep yourselves in the love of God.*——We might adduce many other considerations to persuade you to this, but we defer them at present; we may, perhaps, have an opportunity afterwards.

SERMON XCIV.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I passed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.

[The fifth Sermon on this Text.]

THERE are two words that should take up most of our thoughts and cares, namely, TIME and ETERNITY; *time*, because it will soon be at an end; and *eternity*, because it will never come to an end. The candle of time is fast burning, and if we play the fool, and be idle about eternal work, till the candle be burnt out, we will have ourselves to thank, if we go to bed in the dark; I mean, if we go to death and eternity, under the dark cloud of God's wrath, we cannot expect, unless we are madly deceiving ourselves, an eternity of happiness in the other world, if we are strangers to a time of love in this world: for, whom God loved, with an everlasting love from eternity, he draws them with loving-kindness in time, that he may crown them with loving-kindness to eternity. His everlasting love, in point of manifestation, hath its beginning in time, upon all the objects thereof; and these in whom it has no beginning in time will be the objects and vassals of wrath for ever. It is therefore a matter of the highest moment to know what takes place in time now; and if your time be *a time of love.*

We

We have not only finiſhed the doctrinal part of this ſubject; but alſo inſiſted at conſiderable length, on the application, in the proſecution of ſeveral uſes. It now remains that we conclude the ſubject with an uſe of *exhortation.* And our exhortation ſhall be tendered to two ſorts of perſons. 1. To theſe whoſe time NEVER was a *time of love.* 2. To theſe whoſe time HAS BEEN ſuch a *time of love* as I have ſpoken of.

Firſt, We tender our exhortation, to you whoſe time NEVER was a *time of love;* I mean, you, who notwithſtanding of your living under a loving diſpenſation of divine grace, by the goſpel, yet have never ſeen or believed, the love and grace of God in Chriſt, ſo far as to draw out your heart-love to Chriſt. I would ſay to you,

1*ſt*, O conſider what a *miſerable ſtate* you are in, and like to be into, to all eternity. In *time* you are miſerable; for, you are empty of all good, and full of all evil.—How *empty are you of all good*, while you are without Chriſt, and love to him, having nothing of the love of Chriſt? you have no good in you? you would think it a bad houſe to dwell in where there is neither meat, nor drink, nor clothes: but a worſe houſe is your heart, while you have neither God, nor Chriſt, nor the Spirit.—How *full are you of evil*, while deſtitute of the love of Chriſt? Full of enmity againſt God, full of ſin, full of hell, full of the devil, full of the wrath of God, it *abideth upon you;* and you are expoſed to the utmoſt meaſure of it. You are miſerable through all eternity, if you live and die in that ſtate; *If any man love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be* ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA; [that is, *accurſed until Chriſt come,*] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Let him come under the ſentence of the *greater excommunication*, of being for ever baniſhed from the preſence of God.

2*dly*, Conſider how it comes about, that your love goes not out *after Chriſt*, when you live in a time wherein his love and lovelineſs are manifeſted. Surely, it muſt be from ſome deſperate enmity. Have you not heard of his fame? Is there any thing in all the world, challenges your love ſo much? If you have heard and forgotten,

gotten, I will juſt now lay before you ſo much of the lovelineſs of Chriſt as may for ever render you inexcuſable, if you henceforth fall not in love with him above all things elſe. Conſider what he is in *himſelf*, what he is to *God*, what he is to you, *ſinner*.

[1.] Conſider what he is in *himſelf*. Is he not *altogether lovely*, conſidered either in his natures or perſon?

1. View him in his *natures*, divine and human.—In his *divine* nature, he is God's equal; *Who thinks it no robbery to be equal with God;* he is the *true God, and eternal life;* and has in him *all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, that is, perſonally; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*—In his *human* nature: view his human body and ſoul. His human *body* now glorified in heaven, what a glorious body is it? The apoſtle ſpeaks of the glory of bodies terreſtrial and celeſtial; how much more glorious are celeſtial above terreſtrial? And, how glorious above all celeſtial bodies is that of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt! When Paul, at his converſion, got a view of it in a viſion, it exceeded the ſky in its meridian brightneſs. His human *ſoul*, how much more lovely is that? By how much the ſoul is beyond the body, by ſo much the ſoul is more glorious than the body. All the excellent qualities that ever adorned a ſoul are in him to perfection: and beſides theſe, a ſupereminent unction of the Holy Ghoſt, the *Spirit above meaſure*, whereby he is immenſely full of grace and truth.——He is thus the moſt amiable object, viewed in both his natures, human and divine diſtinctly. But beſide this,

2. View him in the *union* of both theſe natures, as different, as finite and infinite, in one perſon: this brings God down to man as near as he can come, and raiſes man up to God as high as he can aſcend. What a terror might unvailed Deity be to guilty ſinners, were it not allayed with the vail of humanity? But, O! how fit a Mediator is he, being IMMANUEL, *God-man?* Thus he has a divine fulneſs and ſufficiency to ſave us, together with a human meetneſs and congruity for applying it in a manner moſt ſuitable and pro-

per to our condition. Now, may not that queſtion be for ever ſilenced with contempt, *What is the* Chriſtian's *Beloved more that another's beloved, that he ſhould* be ſo mightily extolled? Is there one in the world ſo lovely and glorious? Is he not *white and ruddy*, the *chiefeſt among ten thouſand?*

[2.] Conſider what he is to *God;* particularly in theſe two reſpects.

1. Is he not God's *darling?* Has not the Father teſtified his love to Chriſt above all things elſe? Iſaiah xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth.* Mark i. 11. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* What honour conſequently has he put upon him, in *raiſing him from the dead*, and *ſetting him at his own right-hand*, and *giving him a name above every name*, committing *all judgment*, yea *all things* into his hand. He is the Son of his love. We are then to love Chriſt for his own ſake and his Father's ſake: and ought we not to love him as the Father's favourite? Is it not a ſufficient incentive to our love, that, beſide his own perſonal amiable qualities, he is ſo much the object of the Father's love.

2. Is he not the Father's *repreſentative*? God's greateſt repreſentative, in whom he diſplays all his perfections? 2 Cor. vi. 6. John xiv. 9. John i. 18. The repreſentations of the divine glory in Chriſt exceeds all other repreſentations in theſe particulars.

(1.) It is the *brighteſt:* the glory of God ſhines no where ſo brightly as in his infinitely fair face, who is therefore called the *brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image*, [or, REPRESENTATION] *of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3.

(2.) It is the *fulleſt:* the repreſentation of God's glory, in the work of creation and providence, ſet forth, in a moſt illuſtrious manner, *ſome* of his perfections; but here *all* his glory ſhines with inconceivable brightneſs; all his attributes, even his *mercy and truth meet together, righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other.* Here they all ſhine with a peculiar luſtre, and harmoniouſly conſpire and centre.

(2.) It

(3.) It is the moſt *intimate* and *propitious:* how could God reveal himſelf more *nearly*, than through the fleſh of his Son? How more *graciouſly*, than by giving him to us, and for us? How more *kindly* could he repreſent his infinite juſtice and holineſs, than as vindicated, ſatisfied, and glorified in Chriſt, by whom *grace reigns, through righteouſneſs unto eternal life.*

(4.) It is the moſt *ſafe* repreſentation of the divine glory, and ſecure from being perverted to an undue exaltation of the medium: for, the glory of God, repreſented by the heavens, has been abuſed to idolatry, men worſhipping the means by which God manifeſts himſelf: but here there is a ſafe repreſentation; the mean and end meet in one: we cannot put too much honour upon Chriſt; *He that honours him honours the Father.*

(5.) It is the moſt *myſterious:* here is the *wiſdom of God in a myſtery;* the *manifold wiſdom of God:* ſuch a large compaſs, both in contrivance and execution, that none can penetrate into the depth.

(6.) It is the moſt *durable* and *permament:* ſee Iſa. li. 6. *The earth ſhall wax old as a garment; but my ſalvation*, through Chriſt, *ſhall be for ever; and my righteouſneſs ſhall not be aboliſhed.* God will never ceaſe to manifeſt his glory through Chriſt: though there may be different ways of that manifeſtation, yet it will be to eternity; Revel xxi. 23. *The Lord God, and the Lamb, is the light of the place.* Rev. xxii. 3. *The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb; and his throne is for ever and ever.*

Now, conſider what a ſacred and precious thing the divine glory is above all other concerns; and that a proportionable love and eſteem is due to things according to the impreſſions of God upon them, and their reference to God's glory. Doth not Chriſt then challenge our higheſt love and eſteem on this account, beſides what he merits from us by his original intrinſic excellency.

[3.] Conſider, what he is to us, or what relation he ſtands in to ſinners; and what he has done, or is doing, by virtue of that relation.

1. What relation he ſtands in to us, ſinners, as a Saviour of God's appointing and anointing; *We teſtify that God ſent his Son to be the Saviour of the world*, 1 John iv. 14. He is a Saviour of ſinners by *office*; and ſhould not ſinners love their Saviour, and employ him? Should we not love him with a love of deſire, to cloſe with him as our Saviour; and then with a love of delight in him? The general relation to us ariſing from his partaking of the ſame nature, is the foundation of a particular relation, and ſhould be improven to the neareſt relation of being myſtically one.

2. What he *has done* and is *doing*. He came from heaven to earth to *ſeek* and to *ſave loſt ſinners*; he made himſelf in all things *like unto us, ſin only excepted*; excepted as to the *inheſion* of it, which was abſolutely remote from him: but not excepted as to the *imputation* of it; for, *He bore our ſins in his own body*, and ſubmitted to have the *iniquities of us all laid upon him*, that he, as our Surety, might become accountable and anſwerable for them: and as the *Lamb of God ſacrificed for us*, might take them away: finding us obliged to the *perfect obedience* the law required, but utterly unable to perform it, and ſo cut off from the remoteſt poſſibility of ever obtaining that life it was ordained to convey: he yielded in our place, an obedience to it abſolutely perfect, and meritorious of eternal life, and gives this his righteouſneſs to us, to become our title to heaven and eternal happineſs: finding us preſſed down under an *immenſe debt* to divine juſtice, and the penalty of the law, he took it on himſelf, paid it off, and diſcharges us by ſuffering for us; thus he is the *end of the law*, and perfection of it, *for righteouſneſs*, which we could never attain ourſelves, but do now in him, the end and determination of its penal ſanction: finding us in priſon, bound with the fetters of our own iniquities, held in the cords of ſin and miſery, and reſerved to the day of wrath and vengeance, he comes and viſits us in our priſon, and is content to be kept there for a time, in our room, till he ſhould ſatisfy for our crimes, that we might be ſet at liberty: finding us under

under the *curſe*, *he is made a curſe for us*, that we might be redeemed from it; finding us *doomed* to death, he *died for us*, *that we might live*: finding us lying under the edge of the *flaming ſword* of vindictive juſtice, he put his own neck upon the block, and made his *ſoul an offering for ſin*: finding a cup of heavy *wrath* and *indignation* prepared for us, he took it out of our hands, into his own, and drank it off, in our ſtead, that we might not have the leaſt drop to our own ſhare, but in lieu of it a cup of ſalvation for us to drink.

Was there ever love like Chriſt's, which ſuch floods of tribulation could not quench or drown! Though he was God, yet he became man; yea, *His viſage was more marred than any man, and his form more than the ſons of men*, Iſa. lii. 14. So that he was ſo far from appearing like a God, that he ſcarce looked like a man, but rather as a *worm*, Pſalm xxii. 7. A worm trampled on by all; a *reproach of men*, and *deſpiſed of the people*. Why all this, but that his love might ſhine the brighter through the dark ſhades that eclipſed his glory? The more he leſſened his perſon, the higher he raiſed his love, which appeared in all his fulneſs, while the other diſappeared, as it were, for a ſeaſon, and ſeemed to fade away. Thus he is amiable in his *poverty*; for, *He was made poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*: amiable in his *ſtripes*, whereby *we are healed*: amiable in all the amazing inſtances of *ſelf-abaſement*, providing for the greateſt happineſs to us, at the greateſt expence to himſelf.

Ought he not to be loved, who thus has loved us unto death? Who muſt be loved if not he? And how ſweetly may the love of a believer entertain itſelf at the very croſs of Chriſt, which is a tree of life; of life to us, though it was a tree of death to him; a tree of bleſſedneſs to us, though a tree of bitterneſs to him? We may gaze at the croſs, and Chriſt hanging upon it, and have loving, raviſhing proſpects here, without the leaſt partaking of the diſtreſs and bitter anguiſh of ſpirit Chriſt endured upon it; for the croſs of Chriſt being the greateſt proof and pledge of his love, ought to be the joy, crown, and glory of every beholder;

der; and viewed, not with a sad, heavy, and fearful, but with a glad, chearful, and joyful heart; at which we are to dry up every tear of heart-breaking grief, and vent none but tears of joy, mixt only with these of sweet relenting sorrow; mourning over sin, which by no means marrs, but friendly accords with this joy. We may sit under the shadow of his cross with great delight, with a rejoicing heart, and find all the fruits of it, being fruits of love, grace, favour, and happiness inexpressibly sweet to our taste. Here the horror of his cursed, painful, and shameful death can by no means damp the joy and satisfaction; *Weep not for me*, said Christ. Why? his sufferings were voluntarily necessary, designed for an happy issue; and it was not possible he could be swallowed up, or consumed by them; and they are now long since past and gone, as to the smart he felt below, though abiding still in their virtue, use, and excellent fruits, and are now so many trophies of honour; beauties instead of blemishes, and highest matter of glory and triumph: hence he appears in heaven with the marks of his bleeding wounds, *A Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne.* The shame and pain of his cross redounds to him for an ensign of honour and eternal glory; a perpetual memorial of his love, merit, and victory.

3. What is he *still doing?* Still pursuing the *same kind design*, though in a *new manner.* As his love was proved here by *poverty* and *tribulation*, it is now proved by a *fulness of glory* and *power*: his love was here in *labour* and *distress* for us; now it is *inthroned* and *triumphing*, yet still for us also. He remembers us so as to think himself imperfect and incomplete, and as only half glorified till we come to be glorified together with him. As he laid down one life for us on earth, so he employs another for our use in heaven; living there to intercede in virtue of the obligation he made, Heb. vii. 25.: living there to send down his Spirit, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, of grace, supplication, sanctification, and consolation: and to lead, guide, direct, begin, and carry on his good work; make application of his redemption; living to execute his offices

fices fully, which he happily began on earth; and to perform his promises, that are *Yea and Amen in him.*— Is there no loveliness here? Is this love and loveliness of Christ discovered to you, and yet no *time of love* with you? No love of desire after him wrought in you? How inexcusable art thou, and wilt thou be, that loves vanity instead of him!

Secondly, We next direct our exhortation in a word to these whose time HAS BEEN a *time of love.* And these are of two sorts; either such as *doubt* if their time has been a time of love, or such as are *assured* their time has been a time of love.

1*st*, Such as DOUBT of it, and yet their time has really been a time of love. These doubters are of two sorts: some are waking and mourning doubters; others are sleeping and slumbering doubters.

[1.] Some are *waking* and *mourning* in their doubts, and apprehensive that they NEVER HAD a *time of love.* "Alas! say such, many a sermon and sacrament have "I attended; but, to this day, I never met with a time "of love: wo is me that I cannot get a discovery of "the glory and loveliness of Christ, nor my heart "engaged to love him!" If this be thy case and exercise, mourning and crying, O for a time of love! There are two scriptures I would direct you to for relief.

1. If you are *mourning* and in *heaviness* because you reckon your time has not been a time of love, or of power, read Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. *He is anointed to give these that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness.*

2. If you are *crying* for a time of love, read Isaiah xxx. 18, 19. *He is a God of judgment; and blessed are all these that wait for him. He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.* He will turn at a cry, as that word *need* signifies, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of* NEED. Pressing need, that makes you cry: he

he turns, as it were, at the cry, according to the promise here, *He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry.* Therefore wait patiently, hopefully, and carefully for him, who has either begun, or is beginning the good work.

[2.] Some are *sleeping* and *slumbering* doubters, that HAVE HAD a *time of love*, but now it is out of sight, by reason of their backsliding, and leaving their first love. To you I would say,

1. O *remember whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do thy first works!* Consider what answer you will have to these questions: *What* INIQUITY *have you found in him, that you have gone far from him?* Have you seen any thing in Christ to alienate your affections from him? Was he ever worse than his word? Or, is there any uncomelineſs in his way?—What *comelineſs* have you seen in other lovers? Have you found any other object like him? Is there any amongst the creatures that can do for you what he has done? Can the world give you that which he has to give you? Do you find rest and satisfaction to your heart and conscience elsewhere? What *sweet days* had you once when your heart went out after him? Could you not then have said, *My Beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me*, and *the desire of my soul is towards him*, when he brought you to the banquetting-house, and displayed his banner of love over you, making you to drink of the spiced wines? May not a reflection upon these sweet days you had, when his candle shined upon you, break your heart, that now you are set to the back of the door, and say, *O that it were with me as in months past?*—What *sad days* have you had since you departed from him, and was shut out of doors, and had a screen drawn between him and you? What a *sad change* is there when you want that sweet communion with him that once you had? O then! remember whence you have fallen.

2. Return to him, saying, *I will go and return to my first husband.*——*Return ye backsliding children, though you have played the harlot with many lovers, for I am married unto you, saith the Lord. I hate putting away.*

I am

I am God, and change not; therefore you are not consumed. Return for he ſtands ready to heal your backſlidings.

To both ſorts, whether you be waking or ſleeping Chriſtians, to whom a time of love is dubious, I would exhort you to hear his *loving cries* after you, and let it be followed with your cries after him.

(1.) Hear HIS loving cries after you.—One cry he ſends after you, is that of the angels, Luke ii. 10. *Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy; for to you is born a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. To you a child is born, to you a ſon is given.*—Another cry after you is that, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold! I ſtand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and ſup with him, and he with me.* He is ſeeking to ſup with you, to have communion with you, and you with him. I am knocking at the door of your underſtandings, at the door of your wills, at the door of your hearts and affections: do you not hear me knocking?—Another call is that, Song v. 2. *Open to me, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, my love, my dove; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* I have ſuffered the midnight-ſhower and ſtorm of divine wrath for you, it fell on my head; I have ſuffered for you, and now I am here ready to apply the bleſſing of my blood; *open to me:* I own you for my love, my dove, and my undefiled, having no ſpot but what my grace ſhall cover.—Another cry is that, Song iii. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him.* He is holding forth the ſceptre; to thee to go forth by faith and take a view of him till your heart be fully ſatisfied? O come, taſte and ſee; come and ſee him; ſee what he has done for you, what he is doing for you, and what he will do for you.—Another cry is that, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world!* Are your ſins great and many, yet, O let no ſin keep you away! *The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin:* there is infinite virtue in that blood for making you perfectly clean.—Another cry is that, Matt. xxii. 4. *All things are ready, come to*

the marriage. O was you never married to the Son of God? Come, and be the *bride the Lamb's wife;* give your heart and hand to him, and take hold of him for your Head, Husband, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Or, have you have been already married to Christ? O come and get confirmation; get a new token of his love; come to the *marriage supper of the Lamb.*—Another cry is, in case you think it is not a free wedding, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye; buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.*——The poorer you are the welcomer to the market: no money here is good price: here is grace and glory freely; *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*—But, are you yet sighing under the burden of sin and guilt? Then another cry is, Matthew xi. 28. *Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* to your souls: come, and get rest to your *minds* in him, who, as a Prophet, is the *wisdom of God;* come, and get rest to your *conscience* in him, who, as a Priest, is the *righteousness of God;* come, and get rest to your *hearts* in him, who, as a King, is the *power of God,* and has all the riches of divine fulness in him.—Another cry that he is sending after you is, Jer. iii. 14, 22. *Return, O backsliding children; for I am married unto you, and I will heal your backslidings.* As if he had said, "However grie-
"vously you have revolted and rebelled from the womb
"unto this moment, all bygones shall be bygones;
"only henceforth let it be a bargain between you and
"me, an everlasting bargain never to be forgotten."—Another cry after you is, Song ii. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rocks, and in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* "Do not hide your face from me for shame,
"might he say; do not blush to look to me, nor a-
"fraid to speak to me; come boldly to my throne of
"grace, for I delight to hear thy voice of prayer and
"praise, though it be but a mourning like a dove;

"and

" and I delight to I see you coming boldly and confi-
" dently, depending upon me: you need not fear to
" face me, for I am your kindly suitor; come, trem-
" bling dove, and flee in to my bosom."——Hear HIS loving cries after you.

(2.) Let it be followed with an echo from *you*, even with a *loud cry* after *him*. I will tell you some of the cries you may send after him.—One is, Psalm xxv. 11. *O Lord, for thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* Let not your great sin hinder your crying after him, but be made an argument, inducing you to cry after him more ardently and fervently.—Another cry is, Psalm cxliv. 5. *O bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, and they shall melt.* Mountains are in the way, but let them *skip like lambs*, and the *little hills like rams, at the presence of the Lord.*—Another cry you may send after him is, Song i. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* " Put forth thy
" drawing power; for I cannot come, I cannot move,
" I cannot stir without thee; but I promise to run if
" thou draw."—Another cry you may send after him is that of blind Bartimeus, Mark x. 51. *Lord, that I may receive my sight.* " O enlighten my eyes, that I
" may know the mysteries of the gospel, that I may
" see the glory, grace, and love of Christ."—Another cry is, Psalm xc. 13, 14. *Return, O Lord, how long? O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may be glad and rejoice all our days:* " Thou hast an infinite o-
" cean of mercy, O let the waves of the ocean reach
" my soul! pardoning mercy, purifying mercy."—Another cry is, Song ii. 17. *Till the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*—
" I want ability to mount up the hills of sin, guilt, and
" difficulty between thee and me; but it is the glory
" of the roe to ascend the rocks and mountains: O
" get glory this way!"—Another cry is, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind, come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.* " O send the promised Spirit like

"*water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*" —Another cry you should give after him, that is thus crying on you, is, Jer. iii. 22. *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God;* and with the poor man in the gospel, *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. O send forth thy light and thy truth to lead me.*

2*dly*, We come next to address ourselves to these who are more ASSURED their time has been a *time of love.* I offer these four advices following.

[1.] Do not *deny* or *disown* the time of love; beware of questioning if ever such a time went over you. —Do not deny it to your *fellow Christians*, that you may have it to say, *Come hither all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done to my soul.*— Do not deny it to *God*, that you may have it to say, O *my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* And that you may maintain your confidence before him.

[2.] In *all time coming* remember the *time of love;* for it may be very serviceable to you.—In the time of *temptation*, remember the *time of love;* wherein God becomes forth-coming, that, *with the temptation, he would give a way of escape.*—In the time of *tribulation*, remember the *time of love*; when it was secured that he would be with you in trouble.—In time of *desertion*, remember the *time of love*; wherein it was promised, *He would never leave you, nor forsake you.*—In time of *defection and backsliding*, remember the *time of love*; wherein it was secured, that he would *heal your backslidings, and love you freely, and restore your soul.*—In time of *want* and *poverty*, remember the *time of love;* when you was made to believe that your God should *supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.*—In the time of *reproach* for his sake, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was insured, that, *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God, and of glory resteth upon you.*—In time of *man's wrath*, rage, and persecuting fury, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was secured, that *the wrath of man should praise him, and that the remainder of his wrath he would restrain.*—In the time of *divine*

vine wrath, heavy judgments, and gloomy terrible dispensations, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was promised, that, though *in a little wrath he should hide himself for a moment, yet with everlasting mercy he would gather thee.* See Isa. liv. 7, 8.—In a time of *sin* and *corruption* prevailing, remember the *time of love;* wherein you was made to say, *Though iniquities prevail; yet, as for our transgressions thou wilt purge them away.*—In a time of *sorrow* and *heaviness*, remember the *time of love;* and then you may be led to say, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.*—In a time of *danger* remember the *time of love*, as did the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 10. *We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. He delivered me from the paw of the lion, and mouth of the bear, and will he not deliver from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine?*—In a time of *diffidence* and *distrust*, remember the *time of love*, as a notable means and motive to faith, Lam. iii. 21, 22, 23. *This I recal to mind, therefore have I hope:* THIS, what is it he recals to mind? even the time of love and mercy that follows: *It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.*—In a time of *darkness*, remember the *time of love;* and then you may say, *Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me; The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.*—In a time of *deadness*, remember the *time of love*, and say, *Quicken thou me, according to thy word.*—In a time of *weakness*, remember the *time of love*, and the words of love; *My grace shall be sufficient for you, and my strength shall be perfected in your weakness.* In a time of *death*, remember the *time of love;* and in the believing rememberance thereof, you may say, *Tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff they comfort me. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

[3.] Has ever your *time of need* been his *time of love*, then in all future times of need come *boldly to the throne of grace, that you may find grace to help in time of need*: for, the time of love, in times of need formerly, ſecures his loving help in all time of need to come: only obſerve theſe rules about *help in time of need.*

1. "That your expectation of things *not neceſſary* "or *abſolutely needful*, may fail you." You may be in a deluſion in your expectation of certain outgates you would have, and of ſenſible comforts at all times; but you ſhall never be in a deluſion in your expectation of needful help from the throne of grace; for, the matchleſs God of Jeſhurun *rides in heaven, for the help of his people, and in his excellency on the ſky*, Deut. xxxiii. 26.

2. "That *needful help* and ſupport comes from the *ſame throne* from which *ſenſible comforts* come." It is remarkable, you are called to come *boldly* to that throne, for theſe things you may be always ſure to find there, namely, MERCY and GRACE *to help in time of need*; you are not aſſured always of ſenſible comforts there; be content of ſupport promiſed in time of need; and remember, it is no little mercy to get a little help; that the ſame love may be read in the meaneſt, loweſt meaſure of grace and mercy that is to be read in the greateſt; they come from the ſame fountain, the ſame throne of grace.

3. "That they that get this help may lay their ac- "count, notwithſtanding, to be kept *weak* and *infirm.*" Look not for ſuch help in this world as ſhall make you no more poor and needy beggars at the throne of grace: help and aſſiſtance, you know, is for weak and infirm people. Look not for help that will make you better ſtored in yourſelves than you were before; you muſt be kept *poor and needy*, that the *Lord may think upon you*, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. xl. 17.; and as it is, Dan. xi. 34. you muſt be content to *be holpen with a little help*, and kept from cruſhing, though you be holden in the the duſt: *Troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Lay your account, though you get help, that, as it finds you weak,

weak, so it will keep you weak in yourselves, and yet do your turn.

4. "Help is given to them who have their *hand at a* "*turn.*" We do not speak of helping or assisting such as desire and endeavour to do nothing themselves; so here, expect not help but in God's way, and about his hand, and his throne; aiming at duty, though you are not able to go through it: when thy heart is overwhelmed, and yet thou art crying, when thou art sinking, it is in that posture needful help uses to be given, Psal. lxi. 1, 2.

5. "That help comes not, and is not to be expec-"ted, till a *time of need*, and *pressing* need; such as puts "you to cry under the pressure of the need; as I said "before, the word in the original signifies, to *turn at a* "*cry*, as God promises to do, Isa. xxx. 19." People would be content of help if they could get it beside them, always at hand; but, says the apostle, a time of need shall come, and help in a time of need; *In due time you shall reap if you faint not.* This may be a cure to all anxiety about what shall happen hereafter, or what may be before us. We have no strength to grapple with such unforeseen difficulties; why, but let us remember we are to be busy at the present work of the day, and leave the next day to God, who gives help in time of need: as Christ says in another case, Matth. vi. 34. *Take no thought for to-morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof.* What have we to do with help till it be needed? To what purpose is it to have Jordan running dry, till the priests feet be set in the water? To what purpose is it to know wherewith we shall serve the Lord, till we come thither? And then it shall be given in the hour it is needed, as Christ says, of *speaking to enemies*, much more in speaking to our best friend. This may assure us also that we cannot expect help till we cry, as David, *Out of the depths have I cried to thee.* We are many times in distress murmuring and not crying; we need help, but are not seeking help: God is an observing God as well as a hearing God; he would have us cry when he requires us.

6. "Though

6. "Though *secret support* may be given to them "that cry under their need, yet *satisfying help* may be "delayed for a time." And there are several causes of this delay; some relative to ourselves, and some relative to the church, or the public.

(1.) Some causes relative to *ourselves*. The Lord will not always help when we are pressed under the need of help, that puts us to cry, until the trial comes to the *utmost extremity*; Deut. xxxii. 26. *He will judge his people, and he will repent himself for his servants, when he sees that there is none shut up or left.* As long as we have any thing that looks like doing our own turn without him, he will ly by, Psal. xciv. 16. It is not till the Psalmist said, *My foot slippeth*, and I am just falling over, that needful help comes; but then, *thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* Thus with Abraham in the matter of offering up his son Isaac, Gen. xxii. 10, 11. The Lord is not seen in the mount, till the knife is at the throat of Isaac. This is the Lord's way not to come just when we are really pressed, and hard put to it; as long as there is a step further for the difficulty to go, he may let the trial go on before he comes with help that we may be humbled under the pressures, under the guilt that drew them on; and that we may be put in a capacity of esteeming it a great mercy when we are thus *holped with a little help.*

(2.) Relative to the *public.* The Lord suspends many a time, at least, the comfortable help of partiular saints, till he bring up the public interest with it: and it is not unsuitable to see the children in distress while the mother is wearing a mourning weed. Desertions are not readily the less frequent among saints, that God covers himself in a cloud in his anger from Zion: but there is a blessed time of relief coming, as you may read, Psal. cii. 20, 21, 22. and ver. 16, 17. When the *Lord appears in his glory to build up Zion*, then he will *hear the prayer of the destitute*, and the *groning of the prisoners.* As we use to say, when a thaw comes after a great frost, or rain after a great drought, it looses many prisoners: so when a shower of the divine influences come

come from above upon the church, and an outpouring of the Spirit, then many prisoners shall be set at liberty, many bonds shall be loosed, many a cord broken, that is fettering the people of God: therefore, we are to wait the Lord's time of giving needful help, and be thankful for needful supports, though we yet want sensible comforts: needful waterings shall not be withholden in the mean time, unless we in our petted humour will not be content with support and help, nor will bless him for it, and so provoke God to let us feel our our own weight, that we be humbled and learn to gather our comforts among the midst of our crosses, and our mercies among our miseries, and pleasures among our pressures.

[4.] Has your time been a *time of love*, of God's love to you? Then, let *all your time* be a time of love to him. *O love the Lord all ye his saints*, and let his love *constrain* you to his service: and for this end, maintain a deep sense and impression of his love to you. —Mind how *antient* his love to you was, even prior to your being, from eternity; on the mere foresight of your sin and misery, his eyes affected his heart, and provided a cure before you got the wound.—Remember how *free* and *generous* his love is; how he loved you, not only when you was a stranger to him, a mean person, infinitely below him, a worthless person, having no good quality to recommend you, and indued with many odious qualities, but an enemy, a desperate rebel, mere grace only could draw out this love.—Recollect how *unchangeable* and *everlasting* it is, so as he will never cast you out of his affections, however deserving to be rejected; *He is God, and changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.* He is still overcoming evil with good; as he injoins us to do it, so he is always doing it himself.—Call to mind how *distinguishing* it is, not only when he passed by angels that sinned, but many of your fellow-creatures.—Remember how very *sympathizing* it is, causing him who suffered for you on earth to suffer with you in heaven; for, *In all your afflictions, he is afflicted.*—Mind

how *manifold* it is: it is a love of *desire* after you; he desires fellowship with you, and will never rest nor reckon himself a complete Christ, as to his mystical body, till you be with him together with the rest of his members mystical.—It is a love of *delight*, he takes pleasure in your company; *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. The Lord takes pleasure in his people.*—It is a love of *beneficence* always doing good; and shall not love work love. O let your time be a time of love to him. You that expect an eternity of love, let it be evident to the world, that *your time is a time of love.*

SERMON

SERMON XCV.

SENSIBLE PRESENCE, SUDDEN ABSENCE; or, the Believer's moſt comfortable Interviews, but of ſhort Duration *.

GENESIS XXXV. 13.

And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.

I HOPE ſome, at this occaſion (however few they may be) have had ſome acceſs to God, and fellowſhip with Chriſt Jeſus; yet ſuch are to remember, and conſider that it needs not be thought ſtrange, tho' they ſhould ſenſibly enjoy him, and loſe him in a moment, as Jacob here; *He went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.* What intercourſe was between God and Jacob, you have an account of, from the 9th ver. *And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and bleſſed him.* God met with him in this place, *viz.* BETHEL, and bleſſed him, and he appears again to him. Thoſe to whom God has once manifeſted himſelf, may expect a new viſit of him. At this time there are two notable effects of the appearance God made unto him.

1ſt, God confirms the *name* he had formerly given unto him, calling him ISRAEL. As God gives to all his people, to whom he ſavingly manifeſts him-

* This ſermon was preached at Orwell, on Monday, Auguſt 5th, 1734. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper there.—In the firſt edition of this ſermon, we are told, it was printed, not from the Author's manuſcript, but from the ſhort-hand notes of one who wrote it down in the time of the delivery. On this account, probably, it is neither ſo complete in itſelf, nor yet, perhaps, appears with ſuch advantage as it would have done, had it been copied from the original.—This is the fifth impreſſion.

ſelf, a *new name*; ſo he loves to call them by that new name.

2*dly*, He confirms the *promiſe* he had made unto him of his own name EL-SHADDAI, the *Almighty God*; the God that, when he pleaſes, can give a being to his word, and will make his promiſe effectual in his own time and way.——There are two things God promiſes unto Jacob.

1. That he ſhould be a *father of many nations*, and great kings; and a nation and company of nations ſhould be of him, and kings ſhould come out of his loins.

2. That he ſhould be the *poſſeſſor* of a good land, *viz.* the land of Canaan. Theſe two things had a ſpiritual ſignification; and we now, who live under the goſpel-diſpenſation, if our eyes be open, may ſee the meaning of them, perhaps, better than Jacob could, under this typical repreſentation: the *promiſed ſeed*, pointed at, was CHRIST himſelf, the Great King of Zion, who was to come of Jacob: and the *promiſed land* pointed at, was HEAVEN itſelf, the heavenly kingdom. The former was the foundation, and this the top-ſtone of the *building of mercy* * that we were hearing of. Here then is the promiſe that God makes unto him. God, when he ſavingly manifeſts himſelf to his people, he comes to them as a promiſing God in Chriſt Jeſus.

But then, in the words of the text, you have an account how this intercourſe is interrupted, and marred at preſent, *God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.*——Where we may obſerve two things. 1. *How* he left him. And, 2. *Where* he left him.

1. *How* he left him, *God went up from him.* It was by ſome viſible appearance, that had hovered over him, while God talked with him. God may go up from his people in ſovereignty, when he does not go away from them in anger. However, we are carefully to

* Alluding to the action-ſermon, preached on theſe words, Pſalm lxxxix. 2. *Mercy ſhall be built up for ever.*

obſerve

obſerve, that it is not *viſible* appearances of God that now we are to expect, *God is a Spirit*, and inviſible; and as we are to worſhip him ſpiritually, ſo we are to ſee and enjoy him ſpiritually.

2. Obſerve *where* he left him; it was *in the place where he talked with him.* The name of the place is Bethel; and you ſee that Jacob here ſets up a pillar, as a memorial of the communion he had with God there, and calls the name of the place Bethel; he confirms the name formerly given to the place, when he had met with God there, he calls it Bethel, *the houſe of God:* it was even here, in this very place, *the houſe of God*, that *he went up from him, where he talked with him.*

The doctrine, that I propoſe to ſpeak a little unto, is the following.

Doct. *That they who have had communion and converſe with God, may miſs him in the very ſpot where they enjoyed him.* God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.

Thus it was with the diſciples at Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 31. their eyes was opened, ſo as they knew him, *And he vaniſhed out of their ſight;* or, as it is in the margin of ſome of your Bibles, *He ceaſed to be ſeen of them;* They enjoyed his preſence, and yet inſtantly he ceaſed to be ſeen of them. Again, you may obſerve, the paſſage in the mount of transfiguration, where Peter ſays, unto Jeſus, *Lord, it is good for us to be here;* and then it follows in the next verſe, *While he yet ſpake, behold a bright cloud overſhadowed them*, Matth. xvii. 4, 5. A cloud may quickly intervene between God and the ſoul that has communion and fellowſhip with him.

In handling this ſubject, I propoſe, as the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to aſſiſt, to obſerve the following method.

I. To

I. To touch a little at the *communion* his people may have with him, which is here called a *talking with him.*

II. Offer a few remarks concerning their *miſſing* and *finding* the Lord.

III. Enquire in what *reſpects* they may miſs him where they enjoyed him.

IV. I would give ſome *reaſons* of this diſpenſation.

V. Make *application* of the whole.

I. As to the *firſt* of theſe, To ſpeak a little of this *communion* that God's people may have with him, which is here called a *talking with him; God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.*

This communion and converſe with God may import theſe five things.

1. It imports the *preſence of God*, and his perfections round about them; for, *As the mountains are round about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about them that fear him*, and ſo his perfections do ſurround and environ them. Indeed, we are to diſtinguiſh between *ſenſible* preſence and *real* preſence: God is always *really* preſent with his people; for he has ſaid, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee;* but he is not always *ſenſibly* preſent. He may be preſent at their hand, when they do not ſee him, as in the caſe of Mary, when ſhe was talking with Chriſt, and yet aſked where ſhe might find him. We are to diſtinguiſh alſo between his *quickening* preſence and his *comforting* preſence: the Lord may be preſent with his people quickening them to duty, and yet they may want ſenſible comfort in duty. To this purpoſe ſays the ſpouſe, *I ſought him, but I found him not. I ſought him;* there is his quickening preſence exciting her to duty; *But I found him not*, I wanted his ſenſible comforting preſence.

It imports *vicinity* and *nearneſs;* the Lord is graciouſly near to them; he is graciouſly near to all that *call upon him in truth, a preſent help*, eſpecially in the *time of trouble*, as here he was to Jacob in his trouble.—— Again,

3. This

3. This converſe they have with the Lord, not only imports vicinity and nearneſs, but *amity* and *friendſhip*, as ſays the prophet Amos, iii. 3. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* So I may ſay, *Can two* talk *together unleſs they be agreed?* There is no ſweet converſe with God, but what imports agreement. It takes in, then, their friendſhip with him; their being reconciled to him in the blood of Jeſus.

4. It imports *communion* with him, ſuch as that, *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* They have fellowſhip with God in Chriſt: fellowſhip with him in his LIFE; *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo:* fellowſhip with him in his LOVE, while he *ſheds abroad his love in their hearts.* Again,

5. It imports *communication;* and this communication, or God's talking with his people, it has many things in it.

(1.) There is therein, ſometimes, a mutual *intimation* of love? the Lord ſometimes intimates his love unto the ſoul, ſaying, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love:* the ſoul ſometimes intimates its love to him again, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee.*

(2.) It takes in ſometimes a mutual *commendation* of one another; I ſay, mutual commendation; the Lord, when he is talking with them, he ſometimes *commends* them forſooth, *Behold, thou art fair; thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee:* and indeed they cannot but bluſh, when he commends them after this manner. Again, they commend him, (as it well becomes them,) *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſand; his mouth is moſt ſweet; yea, he is altogether lovely,* infinitely lovely. Again,

(3.) This communication has in it, ſometimes, mutual *counſels* imparted, their minds imparted.——The Lord imparts his mind to the ſoul, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant:* and the ſoul imparts its mind again to God, and pours out its heart unto him, telling him all his mind, that he cannot tell the world. Again,

(4.) This

(4.) This communication takes in the mutual *confidence* they (expreſs in one another. It is wonderful that the Lord has a kind confidence and truſt he puts in them: there are ſome believers he will not truſt, knowing what is in their hearts; but there are others to whom he commits a truſt, he commits his *name* and *truth* to them, Rev. ii. 13. knowing that, through his grace, they will be faithful. They put their truſt in him: Lord, all my confidence is in thee; I have no hope but in thyſelf: and they expreſs their truſt in him, as Job does, chapter xiii. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Again,

(5.) This communication, it takes in the mutual *care* they expreſs to one another: O the wonderful care that Chriſt expreſſes of his people! That is obſerved by the church, when ſhe ſays, *His left hand is under my head, and his right-hand doth embrace me*, Song ii. 6. O the tender care of the Lord Jeſus towards them! And then they ſometimes expreſs a care with reference to him and his intereſt, and his concerns; their great concern is, to have his honour and glory advanced in the world.

(6.) This communication takes in mutual *aſſurances* of love: he aſſures them of his love unto them, and relation unto them; *I am thy God, I will be thy God.* Well, they acknowledge ſometimes this relation, and therefore cry out, *My Lord, and my God:* and ſometimes, when they are under the influence of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of adoption, they acknowledge their relation, crying out, ABBA, *Father.*

In a word, this communication ſometimes takes in a mutual *dedication* of themſelves to one another: the Lord gives himſelf unto them: he gives himſelf, he gives his Chriſt, he gives his Spirit, he gives his bleſſing unto them, and they ſurrender all that they have, and are, unto him: they give up themſelves, their name, their children, their ſoul and body, and all their concerns unto him; they put all into his hand. This is a part of their communication, their mutual talk with him.——So much ſhall ſuffice for a touch at this firſt head. I go on,

II. To

II. To the *second* thing propoſed, *viz.* To offer a *remark* or two concerning the *finding* and *miſſing* the preſence of God. O Sirs, what know we, or do we know any thing of that preſence and fellowſhip with God, that I have been mentioning? That the Lord's people may have ſome further view of this matter, there are thoſe few remarks I would offer, concerning their meeting with him, and their miſſing of him.

The *firſt* remark I offer is this, "That theſe who "are acquainted with his coming, and going, they "are the *ſeed of Jacob*, praying Jacob, to whom God "has ſaid, *They ſhall not ſeek* him *in vain.*"——And ſometimes they have it to ſay, *I ſought him, and I found him;* but many times they have it to ſay, We ſought him, but we miſſed him: we *ſought him, but* we *found him not.* There is *a generation that ſeek the face of Jacob's God.*

But, *ſecondly,* I would here remark, "That ſuch an "enjoyment of God's preſence, as his people deſire, "and would be at, is *denied* them while they are in "the world." And this he is pleaſed to do for many wiſe and good reaſons: partly, to draw out their deſires more after him; partly, to quicken their endeavours, in ſeeking after him; partly, to prove and humble them, and *to do them good in the latter end.*

But then, *thirdly,* another remark, I would offer is, "That the Lord's communicating himſelf unto his "people, is in a way that is very *variable.*" He many times ſurpriſes them with his viſits.—Sometimes he comes when they are in their worſt caſe. He ſometimes talks with them when they are napping, as it were; he takes them when they are dead, and *like beaſts before him.*—Sometimes when they are in their worſt frames; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Well, ſaith the Lord, *I have ſeen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts to him, and to his mourners,* Iſaiah lvii. 17, 18.—Sometimes he comes to them, when they are juſt at the giving over; *I ſaid I am caſt out of thy ſight,* ſaid Jonah, *yet will I look again*

towards thy holy temple, Jonah ii. 4.—Sometimes their ordinary attainments do exceed their communion-attainments; and hence they have it many times to ſay, O that it were with me at a communion-table, as in ſuch a time, and ſuch a time.——The Lord's way is *variable*.

But again, in the *fourth* place, I would here remark, "That the Lord's hiding himſelf, and the ſoul's "miſſing of his preſence, when either they are ſeek-"ing after him, and are diſappointed; or, when they "have found him, and do immediately miſs him, I ſay, "it is very *heavy* unto them." Alas! it is a great burden to them! Uſually, when they thus miſs him, they are compaſſed with clouds of darkneſs. It may be they are in darkneſs about *duty*, not knowing what to do. Perhaps, they are in darkneſs about their *graces*, not knowing whether they are gold or counterfeits. It may happen, they are in the dark about the *promiſes*, not knowing whether they belong to them or not. It is poſſible, they are in darkneſs about their *experienees*, whether they be deluſions or not.—They are oft-times filled with amazement, when they miſs their Beloved. When their love is away, they think ſuch a diſpenſation is contrary to his merciful nature; they are apt to think ſometimes, that it is contrary to his gracious promiſe, and that it is contrary to the experiences of his people; and, perhaps, contrary to their own experiences; and contrary to the hopes they have had.—They are, I ſay, in great *heavineſs*, for ordinary, when they miſs him.

But again, a *fifth* remark I offer here, is, "That "when the Lord has been long away from his people, "and, at laſt, returns to them, readily the meeting is "very *remarkable*."—Their meeting with him then is readily remarkable for its *fulneſs*: it is like a great ſhower after a long drought; or, they get the more full meal, that they have been long faſting; and the longer they have wanted acceſs, the acceſs is the nearer.—Readily ſuch a meeting is remarkable for the *ſweetneſs* of it. O! how ſweet is it when the Lord's people meet with him, when he hath been long abſent!

It

It is like the *loſt piece of ſilver*, Luke xv. 8, 9. Here is a loſt privilege I have found again; I thought the Lord would never have returned to me again; but now I have got him again.—Such a meeting is remarkable for the *melting quality* of it: it is like the meeting of two dear friends, that have been long aſunder, that fall a weeping for joy in one another's arms. O the joy that a meeting between Chriſt and his people cauſes, after they have been long aſunder.—It readily alſo is remarkable for the *power* and *efficacy* of it. It has a powerful and ſtrong impreſſion on them, when they meet with him, after he has been long away. It is a Bethel that they will not eaſily forget; *I will remember thee*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*, Pſalm xlii. 6.

But again, in the *ſixth* place, I would here alſo remark, "That theſe meetings with the Lord are very "*rare*." They are not to be expected from the Lord often: they are feaſt-days; and every day is not a feaſt-day. They muſt come down from the mount; *We muſt live here by faith, not by ſight*. The Lord's people, many times, cannot bear a full cup, far leſs carry with it for a long time.

But again, *ſeventhly*, I would here remark, "That "the Lord's coming and going, his peoples meeting "with him, and their miſſing of him, are remarkable "and diſcernable, according to the *degree* of his com-"ing and going." Sometimes in his coming unto them is more *ſudden* and *ſurpriſing*; and then they readily know his coming. Sometimes it is more *gradual*, and leſs diſcernable; ſo it is alſo with his going. Sometimes he goes away more ſuddenly, and they miſs him immediately; and ſometimes he goes away gradually, and then they may not ſo eaſily know that he is gone; as it is ſaid of Samſon, *The Lord departed from him, and he wiſt it not*.

But then I would remark, in the *eight* and *laſt* place, "That this diſpenſation of divine grace, his manifeſ-"ting himſelf, and allowing his people acceſs to him, "and ſuch communication with him, as it is a rare

" thing, ſo it is a *great myſtery*." It is even a myſtery to them who know it; for they know but *darkly: Now, we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face.* It is a hidden myſtery to the moſt part of the profeſſors: it is like the *holy of holies*, that none but the prieſts entered into; ſo none but theſe that are *kings and prieſts* unto their God know any thing of it.

Having offered theſe remarks concerning this his *coming*, and *going* from his people. I go on

III. To the *third* thing propoſed, which was, To enquire in what *reſpects* they may miſs him, where they enjoyed him; *God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.* On this head, there are theſe eight particulars I would ſhortly touch at.

1. They may miſs him in the *duties* wherein they have enjoyed him. They may miſs him in the *word* wherein they have enjoyed him to their ſweet experience; *I will remember thee*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*, Pſalm xlii. 6. I will remember by-paſt experiences.——But it ſeems, for all that, he miſſed him there; for he ſays in the next verſe, *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*—They may miſs him in the duty of *reading the ſcriptures*, wherein ſometimes they have enjoyed him. It is ſometimes the food of their ſouls; at other times it may be a ſealed book to them. —They may miſs him in the duty of *meditation*, where ſometimes they have enjoyed him; *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm civ. 34. But again, they may have it to ſay, *I remembered God, and was troubled.*—They may miſs him in the duty of *prayer*, wherein they have frequently enjoyed him, and got him in their arms; they may ſo miſs him, as to be obliged to ſay, *Why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? Wherefore hideſt thou thyſelf from me?* But again,

2. They may not only miſs him in the duties wherein they have found him, but they may miſs him in the *frames*

frames wherein they have enjoyed him.——They may miſs him ſometimes even in a *mourning* frame, and may *go mourning without the ſun.* Mary ſeeks him weeping and mourning, and ſhe miſſes her Lord, though ſhe was in that frame.——Again, they may miſs him in a *melting* and a *loving* frame; ſo it was with the church, when ſhe ſays, *I ſought him, whom my ſoul loveth; but I found him not.*—They may miſs him, even when in a right *lively* frame; *I ſought him,* (I was quickened to ſeek him) *but I found him not.*——They may miſs that preſence that ſometimes they had, and that they would gladly be at. But again, in the *next* place,

3. They may miſs him in the *beſt caſes* wherein they have enjoyed him: they may miſs him in that caſe they think to be beſt, and that caſe which is really beſt. They may miſs him when they think they are beſt, *viz.* in a *joyful* caſe; yet they may miſs him, in regard of that meaſure and degree of preſence they would be at. They may miſs him in that caſe when it is really beſt with them. When is it beſt with them? It is beſt when they are believing, and their heart is opening to the Son of God; and yet in that caſe they may miſs him; the ſpouſe ſays, Song v. 6. *I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone.* When they have much and ſweet enjoyment of him, they may ſuddenly miſs him, and when they are opening the door of their heart to him, he may diſappear. But again, in the

4. Place, They may miſs him not only in the beſt caſes, wherein they have enjoyed him; but they may miſs him in the *worſt caſes*, wherein they have been prevented and ſurprized with the communications of his favour: for inſtance, they may miſs him in *confuſed times*, when the enemies of the Lord are making a tumult, and when all things are ſeeming to run to diſorder and confuſion, though the Lord uſes ſometimes to refreſh them in ſuch circumſtances, according to his word; *There is a river*, ſays the pſalmiſt, *the ſtreams whereof ſhall make glad the city of God*, Pſal. xlvi. 4. I remember it is ſaid, Pſal. lxxxiii. 1. *Keep not thou ſilence, O God: hold not thy peace and be not ſtill, O God; for lo,*

thine

thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee, have taken crafty counſel againſt thy people, and conſulted againſt thy hidden ones; and at the ſame time it ſuppoſes, that the Lord is ſilent, was not taking notice as he uſed to do, and as they expected he would.—Again, they may miſs him in the time of *perſecution*, when he uſes to ſtand by his people, as Paul ſays, *The Lord ſtood by me;* even in ſuch a time they may miſs his preſence, as the church ſays, Song v. 7. *The watchmen, that went about the city, found me, they ſmote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me:* there was perſecution, and at the ſame time ſhe is crying, and yet finds him not.—Again, they may miſs him in the time of *temptation*, when he uſes to ſtand up in ſuccouring them, making a way to eſcape; thus it was with Paul, he was buffeted by Satan: he prays and prays again, yet the temptation continues; and he miſſes him, until he goes on and finds him; and the anſwer the Lord gives him is, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs.* However, I ſay, in the times of temptation they may miſs him.—Again, in times of *tribulation* and *affliction*, he uſes to come to them, according to his word, *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee*, Iſa. xliii. 2. Yet even when going through fire and water they may miſs him; as it was with Job when, in great affliction, he cries unto the Lord, and he does not regard him; *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left-hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himſelf on the right-hand, that I cannot ſee him*, Job xxiii. 8, 9. Oh! ſay the Lord's people, I would think nothing of my affliction, if the Lord did not hide his face: this is not a ſtrange caſe; you may miſs him even then, as is evident from what I have ſaid.—Again,

5. In the next place, the Lord's people they may miſs him, in the *words of grace*, wherein ſometimes they

they have enjoyed him. The Lord manifeſts himſelf ſometimes in the word, and gives them his preſence by means of his word; and then they have it to ſay, perhaps, with the pſalmiſt, *The Lord hath ſpoken in his holineſs, and I will rejoice*, Pſal. lx. 6. But at other times, they may ſo far miſs him, that they may cry out, *All men are liars*. But how, Sirs, can believers make God a liar, but by making the prophets liars, and the words of the prophets lies? *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* Pſal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. They may at ſome times meet with a promiſe, and rejoice therein; but at other times that promiſe may be taſteleſs to their ſouls; they can ſee nothing of God there. I ſay, they may miſs him ſometimes in the words wherein they have enjoyed him. Again,

6. In the next place, they may miſs him in the *inſtruments* whereby they have enjoyed him; it may be ſuch a miniſter, and ſuch an inſtrument, is blaſted to them. He comes to them ſometimes with full breaſts and they ſweetly ſuck out of theſe full breaſts of conſolation; but behold, at other times, he comes to them, with *dry breaſts*, as it were; they can find nothing of God in his ſermon, where they have formerly met with God by him. Why Sirs, we miniſters are *the ſavour of life*, juſt as the Spirit of life is pleaſed to go along with the word: and therefore we have little need to idolize inſtruments.——We may miſs him in the inſtruments, whereby we have enjoyed him. Again, in the

7. Place, we may miſs him in the *ſociety* of the Lord's people wherein we have enjoyed him. It is a commendable practice of ſome of the Lord's people, that they meet for ſocial prayer, and conference, and the Lord many times countenances them in it. It is ſaid, Mal. iii. 16. *They that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that*

that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. They ſometimes meet with the Lord there: but at other times they may miſs him very ſuddenly, and be obliged to ſay with the church, Lam. iii. 8. *When I cry and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer.* And in the 44th verſe, *Thou haſt covered thyſelf with a cloud, that our prayers ſhould not paſs through.* But again,

8. In the next place, to add no more, they may miſs him in the very *place* where they have enjoyed him; *God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.* I ſay, they may miſs him in the very *times* and *places* where they have enjoyed him; and they may enjoy him, but ſuddenly the Lord may withdraw from them. They may miſs him in the public places, the ordinances where they have enjoyed him; they may miſs him in ſecret places, in the chamber, in the field, in the ſpot where they enjoyed him; *God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.* ——So much ſhall ſuffice for the third head.

IV. The *fourth* thing I propoſed was, To give the *grounds* and *reaſons* of this diſpenſation: Whence is it that the Lord's people may enjoy God, and yet may quickly miſs him, even in the very ſpot where they have enjoyed him? I cannot ſtand to enlarge upon this; I ſhall offer ſome reaſons in ſo many words.

1. By this the Lord ſhews his *ſovereignty*, that he is the ſovereign diſpenſer of his bleſſings, and confers them when, upon whom, and in what manner he pleaſes.

2. The Lord by this would alſo confirm his people unto their *Head*, Jeſus Chriſt, who was deſerted of the Father, *My God, my God*, ſays he, *why haſt thou forſaken me?* Alas! this was a bitter cup, yet the Lord will have his people to be plunged in it, ſo to ſpeak, to know the bitterneſs of that cup of deſertion.

3. It is ordered alſo, to make a *difference* between heaven and earth. We are but ſtrangers and pilgrims here: and are not to expect an uninterrupted enjoyment of our Lord in this world. There is an eternity

of

of the enjoyment of God a-coming, unto all the children of grace; and therefore he takes the liberty with his people now to hide himself from them. Again,

4. It is ordered also, for shewing unto us that the Lord may *approve* of his people, and *accept* of their services and duties in Jesus Christ, even when they miss that in duty which they would be at, namely, his blessing of them with his comfortable presence: this is what he will give unto them as he pleases.

5. He would have them to know they are not to *rest* on the means; that they are not to be depended upon, but that they are to use the means, with a respect to his command, and a regard to his authority, even though the Lord should deny his comfortable presence therein.——The Lord orders it also, it may be,

6. To *chastise* their former misbehaviours, either in seeking, or in the enjoyment of him: he will learn them to value his presence, by absenting himself from them.

7. Many times he does it, to *quicken* their endeavours after him, and to lead them unto the due acknowledgment of their sins, by which they have provoked him to depart and hide his face; as the Lord says by his prophet, *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.* Many such reasons might be given, why the Lord orders matters thus.

8. I shall give you one reason more; (and, Sirs, we may tremble when we speak of it) the Lord may hide his face, in many of the duties of his appointment, to shew his *displeasure* against his church and people; and to shew what vengeance may be a-coming upon them, because of their sins and provocations: and the Lord may withdraw from his own people, and hide his face from them, because of their sinful accession to the evils of the time and place wherein they live. Ah! what stroaks may be a-coming upon a sinful generation! And also, for this reason, he may hide his face from his people, that it may not be in their

power to ſtand up in the gap, to hinder the ſtroak to come on; and therefore he hides his face, and hardly allows them to pray. What is the language of it? It is to this effect, *Pray not for this people*, when I am peremptorily reſolved to *bring down vengeance on them*; therefore he with-holds the Spirit of prayer. And he ſometimes withdraws with reference to this very point, that they have not ſo much as the aſſurance of the delay of a ſtroak, becauſe he is quickly to bring it on; and, perhaps, this may be one great complaint of the Lord's people, and of ſome that go many a foot to his ordinances; Oh! the little communion they meet with in them! It may be the Lord is reſerving the comforts of a communion till the time of a wilderneſs want ſhall come; *Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs*, ſaith the Lord, by the prophet, *and ſpeak comfortably to her*, Hoſea ii. 14.

V. I come now, in the *laſt* place, to make *application* of the whole. I ſhall confine my application to theſe two uſes. 1. By way of *trial* and *examination*. And, 2. By way of *exhortation*.

1*ſt*, Is it ſo, that the Lord, when he allows communion and fellowſhip with him to his people, may ſuddenly withdraw, and they may miſs him in the ſpot where they have enjoyed him? Then, O Sirs, you ſhould try what you know of his *preſence*, and of *communion and fellowſhip with him*. It were the leſs hazard that you knew, to your experience, that of *miſſing* him, if ye really knew what it were to *find* him, and what it is to *enjoy* him, and to have communion with him. Why, Sirs, I would have you put it to the trial, if God has been talking with you at this occaſion, or at any other time.——Do you know what it is to have God talking with you; I mean, to have communion and fellowſhip with him? You cannot expect to have the enjoyment of glory hereafter, if it be not begun in grace here. Why, how ſhall we know, ſay you, if we have met with the Lord? Or attained any thing of the enjoyment of him? Why, in the

1. Place,

1. Place, you may try it by this, There are ſome things you will be hardly able to *endure*, if you have met with him.—The Lord's people they cannot endure that God go *away* from them again; or that God ſhould hide his face. Oh! it is heavy to think of the Lord's withdrawing from them: they cannot endure to think that God ſhould be angry with them: they cannot endure that any thing ſhould have Chriſt's room in their hearts: they cannot endure that any thing ſhould hinder or marr that meeting with, and enjoyment of, God they have: they ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for I will keep the commandments of my God.* What will all the world be to me, ſays the ſoul, if I have not communion and fellowſhip with my God?—Again, the ſoul cannot endure any thing that tends to *marr* the enjoyment of God; when he has it, when he is *brought into the banquetting-houſe*, and has the light of God's countenance, he is ready to charge all about him, with the ſpouſe, that they do not provoke the Lord to depart; *I charge you*, ſays ſhe, *O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love till he pleaſe*, Song ii. 7.—— What know ye of this? Again,

2. If ye know his gracious preſence, you will be one that *rejoices* in his *preſence*, and *laments* at his *abſence*.—His *preſence* will be your *chief joy*; his abſence will be your chief ſorrow: his preſence will give you more joy than all the world can; his abſence will make you more ſorrowful, than any thing in time can make you joyful. This is the import of that word, *Thou haſt put, ſays* the Pſalmiſt, *gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time, that their corn and their wine increaſed*, Pſal. iv. 7. —Again, if you be one that has had a meeting with the Lord, then, to be ſure, his *abſence* will be a *diſtreſſing* thing to you. As you deſire his preſence above all things, *and count all things but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, and communion with God in him; ſo, when you cannot win at the enjoyment of him, when you cannot get your heart brought up to love him, when you cannot get your

eyes open to ſee him, you look upon yourſelf as a diſtreſſed perſon, as a broken perſon, as a miſerable perſon, by reaſon of the abſence of God, and the preſence of ſin. A child of God looks upon himſelf to be, and is really, an afflicted and a broken body, by reaſon of the preſence of ſin, and the abſence of the Lord; and therefore he cries out, *O that I knew where I might find him!* But again,

3. If you are one that have experience of this preſence of God, and fellowſhip with him; then you will have ſome fellowſhip with the *ſaints*, the *excellent ones of the earth*. What know you of this? I think this is a good ſign, when the heart warms towards one that is a child of grace, though he be a beggar, or in poor circumſtances, or one of little wit otherwiſe; when your heart warms toward the picture of Chriſt, when your heart warms towards one, becauſe he has the image of Chriſt; *By this we know*, ſays the apoſtle John, *that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren*, 1 John iii. 1, 4. The heart warming towards theſe that have the image of God; it has in it ſomething of heart-warming towards Chriſt himſelf. Again,

4. We may know it by the *humbling effect* of it. When a perſon has the image of God on him he will be humbled; thus Job, when he had got a clear ſight of himſelf, ſays to the Lord, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee; wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes*, Job xlii. 5, 6. O the preſence of God makes the perſon hate ſin; it humbles him to nothing, as the Lord ſays by the prophet, Iſaiah ii. 11. *The lofty looks of man ſhall be humbled, and the haughtineſs of man ſhall be bowed down*, when *the Lord alone is exalted* in the ſoul, when he is preſent on the throne of the heart. Again,

5. We may judge of it by this, they that have met with God and have his preſence, whether they have it ſenſibly or not, they have ſtill an *high eſteem* of Chriſt, even though he ſhould be abſent.——They have alſo an high eſteem of his ordinances, even when but dry breaſts; they dare not undervalue them: nay, they have

have a great regard for every thing that appertains to him, and bears an impreſſion of his image.

6. They have ſomething alſo of a *tenderneſs of heart*, that they dare not allow themſelves in ſin; they dare not live in the omiſſion of known duty, or in the commiſſion of known ſin; and they have ſomething alſo of a tenderneſs of walk; though *iniquities prevail againſt them*, yet they never dare run *into an exceſs* of riot with the wicked world. They are ſuch as *fear the Lord*; or have the character given them that we find recorded in the firſt chapter of Nehemiah, verſe 11. they *deſire to fear his name*.——You may enquire by what I have been ſaying, whether you know the preſence of God, and fellowſhip with him.

I thought to have ſpoke by way of *addreſs*, 1. To theſe who have *known* fellowſhip with him, but now they have miſſed him. 2. To theſe who at *preſent* may be under the joyful impreſſions of their having fellowſhip with God, ſo that he is *talking with them*. And, 3. To theſe that know *nothing* of this intercourſe with God, and as little care for it. I would ſay but a few words to each of theſe.

1*ſt*, As to theſe who *found* the Lord *talking* with them, and who have had ſome intercourſe with him allowed them: but now they have *miſſed* him, and it may be have provoked him to hide his face. All I would ſay to you, is, to offer you theſe two or three advices.

1. I would have you to ſtudy *divine providences* towards yourſelf, and the providence of the Lord towards others of his people, in his coming and going towards them. Eye the ſovereignty of his diſpenſations. Why, it may be, in this ſtudy, you may meet with him; *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving-kindneſs of the Lord*, Pſal. cvii. 43.

2. I would adviſe you, in theſe circumſtances that you are in, if you would have your captivity returned, be concerned on your knees before the Lord, about your *friends*, and others you ſhould be concerned

for

for. It is remarkable, Job xlii. 10. *The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he was praying for his friends:* when you are applying for your friends or others, you may find the Lord turning your captivity.

3. I would adviſe you to be concerned for the *church* of Chriſt. It may, perhaps, be one cauſe of the Lord's withdrawing from you, in your private caſe, on account of your having little concern about the church of Chriſt. You will find, that when Daniel was applying to God for his church and people, then he met with that intercourſe with God, wherein he ſpake unto him, ſaying, *O man greatly beloved:* and, ſays the Lord to Baruch, *Seekeſt thou great things for thyſelf? Seek them not: for behold, I will bring evil upon all fleſh, ſaith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey, in all places whither thou goeſt*, Jer. xlv. 5. Well, be concerned for the public; and in this way you may come to meet with the Lord again. But, then again,

4. Another thing I would adviſe you to, is, endeavour, through grace, to be concerned for, and weighted with, the *ſins* of the day and generation you live in: by this you may get *a mark ſet upon* you; for, he ſets *a mark upon the foreheads of them that ſigh and cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midſt of the city.* But then, again,

5. Believer, ſee that he have you *alone*, if you be complaining that you miſs him in ordinances. I remember what was ſaid concerning Chriſt and his diſciples, chap. iv. 34. *When they were* ALONE *he exponded all things to his diſciples.* See that he have you alone, and ſee that you be much in ſecret with him; and thus the Lord may communicate himſelf to you. He will not readily tell you his mind until he get a convenient time; you may get that in ſecret, that you have not got at a communion-table. Again,

6. I would have you to beware of *conformity* to the generality of profeſſors in our day. O beware of being conformed to them in their neutrality and indifferency about the work of God; and bringing their neutrality

trality this way under the good names of *moderation, good breeding*, and the like: beware of conformity to these; for it is your reproach to be conformed to them in their selfishness, while most part *seek their own things*, and *few the things of Jesus Christ;* and in this way you cannot expect to meet with Christ.—In a word, Do you yet miss him; Wait on him: *The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him.*

2*dly*, But I would now speak a word to these who have *found* the Lord at this occasion, so that he is *talking* with them. It is possible there are some that have the joyful impressions of communion with God, and with Jacob, are *talking* with God, and God is *talking* with them. Are you brought into the mount of communion and conversation with him? Then I would give you two or three advices.

1. O believer, if that be thy case, O be *thankful*, let God have the praise of his mercy: remember to adore, and stir up others to adore and magnify him. You are dignified before many others that are in many respects better than you: What are you that you should be so dealt with? Again,

2. O beware of *idolizing* your entertainment; when you are enjoying these fruits of the Master's kindness, beware of resting upon the fruits; for they will not bear you; but you must rest upon the Tree of life: beware of making a Christ of them: beware of being strong in the grace received; but be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Again,

3. I would advise you to *entertain* Christ well, when he is with you; and beware of provoking him to depart from you. There are several things we should beware of, that provoke him to depart. He may go away in sovereignty, and it is best when he does so, and you have not a sinful hand in it. Beware of *unbelief;* this is readily the first door by which your comforts will go out from you.—Beware of *doubting* of his love, and disputing of the mercy of God, Do you enjoy his love? Are you sure concerning it, as having an infallible mark of it in his word? Then take instruments, that it is no delusion: that so when the Lord hides

hides his face, you may not raze the foundation, calling all in queſtion.—Again, beware of *ſecurity* and *ſleeping* after you have got a good meal. If a friend ſhould come and pay you a viſit, and you ſhould fall aſleep beſide him, he will think, that you make very little of his viſit, and he will ſoon make away from you.—And then I would have you beware of *covetouſneſs* and *worldly-mindedneſs; For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth*, ſays the Lord, by the prophet, Iſa. lvii. 17. There you ſee is both anger and abſence, by reaſon of a covetous heart, a worldly heart, and worldly-mindedneſs; I ſay, beware of this.—Again, I would adviſe you to beware of *defiling the Lord's houſe:* keep the houſe, where he is, clean, ſo as he may not be provoked to depart. Keep the houſe clean for him: endeavour, thro' his grace, to keep the heart clean, to keep it clean from ſecret ſin; *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*, ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſal. xix. 12. Endeavour to be clean, not only from ſecret faults, but public faults and ſins in the day and generation wherein you live. The neglect of this may greatly provoke him to withdraw his preſence from you. Endeavour to be faithful to his truths that are controverted *. Some will be ready to ſay, Why ſhould we be concerned for *controverted truths?* If, indeed, we do not ſtand up for any but theſe which are uncontroverted, the devil and his inſtruments will not trouble us; but if we do not ſo, we cannot be faithful to God. And we are to be faithful to the leaſt truth of Chriſt. Some may be ready to ſay, If, for the cauſe of truth, we are to ſuffer, why not? But many are contending about theſe things that are trifles. O Sirs, If they be the matters of Chriſt, beware of calling them trifles. I remember to have read of a lady in France, at the time of the maſſacre there, that was led away to be drowned for the ſake of her religion; her perſecutors

* Several of theſe controverted and oppoſed truths of God are condeſcended on above, Vol. I. p. 238, Vol. II. p. 304, 305, 466. Vol. IV. p. 148. See alſo Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXIV. LXXXV.

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promiſed her life, if ſhe would but ſay, *Ave Maria*, or *Pater Noſter*. She anſwered, " I might eaſily repeat " theſe words ; but if my doing be ſo interpreted by " you a renouncing of my religion, and a yielding up " of the cauſe of Chriſt, in that ſenſe I will not do it:" and ſo ſhe was drowned. If we come to yield in ſmaller things, we may do it in greater. We are to reckon nothing ſmall in the matters of Chriſt. Then,

4. See that you *improve* his preſence, if you have got it at this occaſion. How ſhall we improve it in the behalf of *Chriſt*, to commend him more to you than ever: and ſure, if you have his preſence, you cannot ſay too much of it ; O improve it for the commending him more and more to you.—Improve it in behalf of his *ordinances*, making them more precious in your view.—And improve this preſence of the Lord in behalf of your *children :* Have you children, man, woman ? Improve it in behalf of them, and cry to God, wreſtle with him for a bleſſing to you and your ſeed, ſeeing he has brought you near.—Improve it in behalf of the *church* of Scotland : plead that he may not take a farewel of Scotland ; that he may return to his ordinances ; that he may return to the judicatories.—O improve your enjoyment of the preſence of Chriſt, in behalf of the churches *abroad*, that are brought very low.—O improve his preſence in behalf of your *friends in Chriſt*, theſe that are in Chriſt, that have not win your length, that have not win half your length. Are you brought into the King's court ? O ſpeak a good word for the Joſeph's that are in priſon, that are under the hatches, that the Lord may advance them as well as you.—Then improve his preſence in behalf of *ſtrangers* who never ſaw any thing of his glory, as we find the church in the Song does, Song viii. 8. *We have a little ſiſter*, ſays ſhe, *and ſhe hath no breaſts : what ſhall we do for our ſiſter, in the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for ? If ſhe be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of ſilver ; and if ſhe be a door, we will incloſe her with boards of cedar.* We ſhould pray for a bleſſing upon the deſign of preaching the goſpel unto a Pagan and a Heathen world : we wiſh that you would mind them

that are called to preach the goſpel to the heathens. O pray that the Lord may be with them.—Then remember the advice that Joſeph gave to Pharaoh, *Lay up for the years of famine;* lay up comforting promiſes and experiences: you may need all that you have got; yea, you may need much more.

3*dly*, I ſhall only ſpeak a word to you that *know nothing* of this preſence of God, of his coming and going; that know nothing of finding or miſſing him; and, perhaps, as little care. You never had any concern about his preſence; for you are ſtrangers to fellowſhip and communion with the Son of God. O man, woman, I would ſay a word to you; O hear what God ſays to you, before he go away from the place where he is ſpeaking to you: he is ſpeaking to you in this everlaſting goſpel. We are not to ſtay here, but we are to part: and we will probably never meet all again, until we come before the tribunal of God, when *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Before God go away, who is talking to you in this goſpel, come to Chriſt, who is dealing with you and ſpeaking to you. Conſider, that if theſe meſſages of grace, that you have got already, at this occaſion, be all ſlighted by you, there are more *terrible ones* abiding you than ever came to Job, and they were right fearful ones: there came one to him and told him, *The oxen were plowing, and the aſſes feeding beſide them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have ſlain thy ſervants with the edge of the ſword, and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee.*—That man is hardly done ſpeaking, when another comes and tells him, *The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the ſheep, and ſervants, and conſumed them; and I am eſcaped alone to tell thee.*—While that man is ſpeaking, another comes in and tells him, *The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon* your *camels, and have carried them away; yea, and ſlain the ſervants with the edge of the ſword; and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee.*—While that man is ſpeaking,

ing, another comes in and tells him, Your *ſons and your daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldeſt brother's houſe, and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderneſs, and ſmote the four corners of the houſe, and it fell upon the young men, and they are all dead* and gone; *and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee*, Job i. 14,—19. Theſe are heavy meſſages; but they are nothing in compariſon of the heavy meſſage that, a few days hence, it may be a few moments, for ought you know, at death, is abiding you. One meſſage will be, That you muſt part with all your dear and near relations you have had upon the earth, and you muſt part with them for ever. Upon the back of this meſſage another comes, Man, you muſt part with all your enjoyments of time; you muſt part with all your profits, pleaſures, or honours. Ere that meſſage is given, another comes, Man, you muſt part with your ſoul; however near the relation was between your ſoul and your body, yet your body muſt go down to the duſt, and your *ſoul to God who gave it*: yea, a ſadder meſſage comes yet, Man, you muſt part with the preſence of God, and you muſt be ſent to hell, and there *puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction*, and be baniſhed for ever, from the *preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Why, poor Chriſtleſs man, you muſt lay your account with this meſſage; unleſs you could make yourſelf immortal: this will infallibly come upon you. This will be the meſſage of death.

And there is a four-fold wo that will come upon you, if you continue in this your natural ſtate.

1. Wo unto you, for you are *certainly* miſerable: *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*, Pſalm ix. 17.

2. Wo unto you, for you ſhall be *ſuddenly* miſerable; when you are ſaying, *Peace, peace*, to yourſelves, *then ſudden deſtruction ſhall come upon you, as travail upon a woman with child, and you ſhall not eſcape*, 1 Theſ. v. 3.

3. Wo unto you, for you ſhall be *doubly* miſerable; you are not only deſpiſers of God's law, but deſpiſers

of the goſpel; therefore your damnation ſhall be double. Then,

4. Wo will be unto you, for you ſhall be *eternally* miſerable: as long as God lives, you ſhall live in Tophet; and when you have lived in it as many thouſands of years, as there are piles of graſs on the earth; and when theſe are expired, and you have lived as many thouſands of years in it, as there are pickles of ſand on the ſea-ſhores; and when theſe are alſo expired, and you have lived in it as many thouſands of years as there are ſtars in the firmament; and when theſe are alſo done, and you have lived in it as many thouſands of years, as there ſhall be moments from the beginning to the end of the world; and when you have counted numbers until they come to be innumerable, one of your great miſeries will be, that it is *eternal*; for time is gone, and there is nothing but eternity remains.

O conſider thy dreadful caſe that haſt no concern about the meſſages of the goſpel, that haſt not been affected with it to this day: I would have you to conſider this, that Chriſt is yet in your offer, before we go from the place we are in; he is yet in the place. I would give you another offer, and if you do not accept thereof, it will make you the more inexcuſable. What ſhould hinder your acceptance, but your unbelief? Has he not condeſcended to be a Saviour to you? Yea; for he is exhibited as the *Saviour of the world*. He is as much your Saviour, as a phyſician of an army is ſo to the whole army, whether they employ him or not. You have a right to cloſe with him; ye deſpiſe your own mercy if you reject him. O Sirs! has he come in your nature, and will you not come to him? Has he *become ſin for you*, and will you not come to him? Has he *become a curſe* for you, and will you not come to him? Has he come at this occaſion to you, and will you not come to him? Has he not ſaid, *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, man, woman, every individual of you? Has he come and declared upon his veracity, that *him that cometh unto me, I will in no-wiſe caſt out?* O Sirs! why then will you not come

to

to him? If thou wilt not let him in at the door of thy heart, thou must answer for it at the great day; *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder; wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no-wise believe, though a man declare it unto you,* Acts xiii. 41.

It may be you have been wondering at all these offers of Christ, and at all these sermons and sacraments; if you will not wonder and be saved, you must wonder and be damned; *Behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish.* What is it, man, that is the matter with you? What is thy case? Art thou not fully warranted to come to this Jesus? What sort of sinner art thou? Art thou *destitute* of knowledge? Why, he comes to be *wisdom* unto thee. Art thou *guilty*? He comes to be *righteousness* unto thee. Art thou a *polluted* sinner? He comes and offers himself to be *sanctification* unto thee. Art thou a *miserable* sinner? He comes to be *redemption* unto thee. Art thou lying among the *unclean pots* of hell? He comes to thee, to make thee as the *wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* Art thou a *backslider*, He says unto thee, *Come unto me, and I will heal thy backslidings, I will love thee freely; for mine anger is turned away from thee.*— What sort of a sinner art thou? If you be upon the face of the earth, you have a right to accept of the offer of Christ made to you in the gospel; *Look unto me*, saith the Lord, *and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else*, Isa. xlv. 22. O that the power of divine grace may draw you! Are you destitute of all grace? Christ comes to you with the offer of his grace in his hand; who is full of all that grace and truth you stand in need of. Are you unable, and saying you cannot come to him? Why, that need be no hinderance: you cannot come to God but by Jesus Christ; and not only as he is the *Way* to God, but as the *Leader*, the *Mighty God*, on whom God *has laid* thy *help;* and he says, Will you be helped out of that horrible pit and miry clay you have fallen into? O! will you take the Mediator's help? Sirs, go alone when ever you have time, and plead that the Spirit of the

the Lord may back the word to you, for without this, it will all fall to the ground.

I ſhall only ſpeak a word (and cloſe with it) to the *Lord's people.* Perhaps your hearts have been touched, and you have ſeen ſomething of the Lord's glory in his ſanctuary. O improve what you have got for ſtrengthning you; remember what is ſaid of Jacob, after he got a view of God at Bethel, it is ſaid, *He went on his way;* it is in the original, *He lifted up his feet.* He was, as it were, dragging his feet before, but then he went on his way, and walked without wearying. O improve any thing you have got at this occaſion for exciting you to run your Chriſtian race, and for fighting your Chriſtian battles. Go forth in the name and ſtrength of the Lord, depending and leaning upon your Beloved. *Walk in the fear of the Lord*, and ſo you ſhall alſo walk *in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt*, as it is ſaid, Acts ix. 31. If you walk under the influence of the Spirit as a Sanctifier, you ſhall walk under his influence as a Comforter.

May the Lord back his own word with his own bleſſing; and to his name be the praiſe.

SERMON

SERMON XCVI.

The MOUNTING CHRISTIAN; or, the EAGLE-WINGED BELIEVER *.

ISAIAH xl. 31.

—They shall mount up with wings as eagles.—

WE have a remarkable question of the disciples, and answer of our Lord, Luke xvii. 37. The question is, *Where, Lord?* The answer is, *Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* Christ had been speaking of days of great tribulation a-coming; and the meaning of the question seems to be, Lord, where shall these that fear thy name fly in these days of trouble and distress? Where shall we find peace in the midst of war? Where is he who gives peace to the world? Where is Christ to be found, to whom the believer shall fly like an eagle to his prey? Faith needs not be at a loss in this inquiry, *Where Lord?* In the womb, in the rags, in the manger? thither may we go to see the Son of God in a low humbled state.—*Where, Lord?* Go to the garden, and see him suffering for your sins the wrath of his Father.—*Where, Lord?* Fly to *Mount Calvary*, and see him on the cross; there may the eagles gather together, and behold him bleeding, suffering, crying, dying for them.—Again, *Where, Lord?* From Calvary to heaven, there he is now, and there must the soul fly, and see him crowned with glory and honour.—*Where, Lord?* Even at a communion-table, where he is spiritually present, to be fed u-

* This sermon was preached at Kinclaven, on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper there, June 1. 1735. It hath been five times printed

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pon like a carcaſe, by the poor, believing, greedy, hungry eagle.—*Where, Lord?* Wherever he be, the the believing ſouls muſt be at him; if on earth, no corner muſt be unſearched: if in heaven, diſtance muſt not keep them from him; nay though he be mounted up to glory, yet they muſt mount up after him, according to his promiſe, *They ſhall mount up with wings as eagles.*

In the four preceding verſes we have the prophet,

1. Reproving the children of Iſrael for their *unbelief* and *diſtruſt* of God, their dejection and deſpondency of ſpirit; *Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeakeſt, O Iſrael; My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is paſſed over from my God*, ver. 27. Why do you think and ſpeak, as if God did not heed and obſerve you, and as if God could not help and ſave you, whatever be your afflicted miſerable caſe?

2. He reminds them of what is able to *ſilence* all their fear and diſtruſt, *Haſt thou not known? haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no ſearching of his underſtanding*, ver. 28. *q. d.* He is an *eternal* God; ſo that there is no defect, no decay in him; he is an *omnipotent* God, who created the ends of the earth, and doubtleſs is as able to ſave as he was at firſt to make the world. He is of infinite wiſdom to contrive your ſalvation; *There is no ſearching of his underſtanding*: none can ſay, ſo far God's wiſdom can go, and no further; for when we know not what to do, he knows; and he is a God of infinite power, he *faints not, nor is wearied*: he upholds the pillars of heaven and earth, and is neither wearied nor toiled with it.

3. The prophet relates to them God's *communicative* goodneſs, *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he encreaſeth ſtrength*, ver. 29. He is not only powerful himſelf, but he communicates power and ſtrength to theſe that need the ſame: *He gives power to the faint.* Many out of weakneſs, even of body, are made ſtrong, and recovered by his providence; and

and many that are feeble in Spirit, unable for service and suffering, yet are strengthened by his grace, with *all might in the inward man;* and especially to them that are sensible of their weakness, he *increases strength:* for when they are weak in themselves, they are *strong in the Lord.*

4. The prophet states the *difference* betwixt them that trust in themselves, and them that trust in God: as for them that trust in themselves, and trust to their own sufficiency, they shall find their strength to be but weakness; *even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail,* ver. 30.; the young men who are strong, and apt to look upon themselves as stronger than they are, and so look not unto God for his grace to be sufficient for them, they shall faint and fall, and be made to see the folly of trusting to themselves. But as for them that trust in the Lord, and wait on him for supplies of grace, *They shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not weary; they shall walk and not faint,* ver. 31.

Thus you see the connexion of the words with the preceding; and in them you have three things, 1. The *exercise* of God's people. 2. Their *privilege, They shall renew their strength.* 3. The *effect* of this privilege, *They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.*

1. The *exercise* of God's people; they are such as *wait upon the Lord.* Now, who are these that wait upon God? I answer, in the words of the psalmist David, Psal. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob;* that is, O God of Jacob. And hence seeking and waiting are joined together; *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, and to the soul that seeks him,* Lam. ii. 25. The true waiter is a seeker, and the true seeker is a waiter upon God. It is a duty comprehensive of the whole character of the religious person. If you be truly seeking God, man, woman, at this ordinance, then you are waiting upon him.

2. But what *advantage* have they that thus ſeek and wait upon God? This is ſhewed us in the ſecond part of the words, their *privilege*; *They ſhall renew their ſtrength.* Their ſtrength ſhall not only be increaſed, but renewed; as there is new occaſion, they ſhall have new ſupplies, and ſo *they ſhall renew their ſtrength*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, *They ſhall* CHANGE *their ſtrength*, as a man changes his raiment: as their work is changed, their ſtrength ſhall be changed, whether it be doing or ſuffering work; they ſhall have ſtrength to labour, ſtrength to wreſtle, ſtrength to reſiſt temptation, and ſtrength to bear burdens; *They ſhall renew their ſtrength*: get new ſtrength for new duty. The beſt of God's children, if continuing long in duty, their ſpirits are waſted: well, God will renew their ſtrength, eſpecially their ſpiritual ſtrength, which is from God himſelf, from whom is their new temper and diſpoſition, their new nature. But what of all this, ſay you; indeed they ſhall have much benefit, if you conſider,

3. The *effect* of this privilege, or how it is made evident; that is evinced in three particulars.

(1.) *They ſhall mount up with wings as eagles.* O it is a great privilege for a believer to be brought, thro' grace, to fly; yea, not only to fly like a weak bird, but to mount up like an eagle, the ſtrongeſt of flying birds: the weak believer, by waiting on God, becomes *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Grace ſtrengthens the ſoul to mount heaven-ward, and carries it above the world and the things of it.

(2.) *They ſhall run and not be weary*; that is, they ſhall run in the way of God's commandments chearfully, and with alacrity, conſtancy, and with perſeverance.

(3.) *They ſhall walk and not faint*; weak and ſickly perſons are in danger to faint and fail when they walk, but *they ſhall walk and not faint.* You have a word, Gal. vi. 9. *Let us not weary in well-doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.* O ſays a child of God, that is endeavouring, through grace, to wait upon the Lord, I fear I never reap, becauſe I will ſoon be

be faint and weary: but here is the promiſe you are to take hold of, *You ſhall run without wearying, and walk and not faint:* and in this way there is no fear but you ſhall reap: grace is promiſed, as well as the reward of grace.

We have already diſcuſſed one doctrinal obſervation from theſe words, *viz. That as it is the duty and practice of God's people to wait on God; ſo it ſhall be their privilege to have their ſtrength renewed.* But having finiſhed what we intended upon this doctrine, we come now to conſider the ſecond obſervation, namely,

DOCT. *That believers, who, in waiting on the Lord, get their ſtrength renewed, they ſhall mount up on wings as eagles.*

The ſcripture is full of parables, where ſpiritual things are repreſented by natural; ſo here, the believer is compared to the eagle: the goſpel of Chriſt is full of them; and it may be for theſe two reaſons.

1. Becauſe parables make a *lively impreſſion* on the minds of auditors, and convey the truth to the perſon before he be aware: ſome, who are ready to forget the truth, will mind the ſimile; and ſo it leads them back again to the truth which they had forgot.

2. To teach us a *ſpiritual* and *ſacred uſe* of the creature, like Jacob's ladder, the foot on earth, and the top in heaven; that by theſe we may aſcend to heaven, and by the creature look above the creature.

The method we would propoſe, for illuſtrating this ſubject, through divine aſſiſtance, ſhall be the following.

I. We ſhall ſpeak a little of the *wings* wherewith they mount up.
II. The *things* wherein they mount up.
III. The *ſeaſons* when it is eſpecially they mount up.
IV. The *manner* how they mount up.
V. The *reaſons* why they mount up. And

VI. Make *some application* of the subject. And in the whole of these particulars study as much brevity as possible.

I. We are to speak of the *wings* wherewith they mount up. And here I might tell you the wings wherewith they are mounted up, and the wings wherewith they do mount.—The wings wherewith they are mounted up are nothing else but the *influences of the Spirit of Christ*; the enlightening and enlivening influences thereof: they are, indeed, more passive than active at first; *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.* Christ being mounted up, he makes all his remnant to mount up after him: and herein they are acted before they act; for, *he works in them both to will and to do.* They are carried up, as it were, on the *wings of the wind*; for these influences of the Spirit, wherewith they are mounted up, are compared to the *wind*, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north wind: come thou south: blow upon my gardens that the spices thereof may flow out.* Believers know well enough what it is to be mounted up on the wings of the Spirit.—But more particularly, as to the wings wherewith they *do* mount up, they are especially these two, *viz.* the wing of *faith*, and the wing of *love*.

1. The wing of *faith* they have, and must have, who would mount up heaven-ward. Now, there is not a feather in this wing, but is made in heaven; *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8. Yea, after the believer hath got faith, he cannot spread out his wing without God; *To you it is given, not only to believe but to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 29. To you, believers, it is given to believe; not only the habit of faith, is the gift of God, but the exercise of faith is his gift also. Now, this is one wing, and none can mount up to heaven without it; for it is a grace that looks not at things that are seen in this world, but at things that are not seen; it is *the evidence of things not seen*; it mounts the soul to heaven and heavenly things, and makes them evident.

2. There

2. There is the wing of *love*, by which the believer mounts up to heaven: and this is a wing made also by God; *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, Rom. v. 5. This is a wing then framed in heaven, a grace that comes from the God of love; and therefore it flies up to heaven again: the holy spark of this fire flies upward. This grace is of such a mounting quality, that it unites the soul of the believer to Christ, as well as faith. As Jonathan's soul was knit or joined to the soul of David by love; so is the soul of the believer knit and glued to Christ by love: and, O this wing of love is a strong wing! Song viii. 6. *Love is strong as death;* yea, stronger than death and life, and principalities, and powers: *I am persuaded*, says the apostle, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 38, 39. This is such a strong wing that the fire cannot burn: martyrs have found that it would abide the fire, when they glorified God in the fires; the fire did not burn their love, no; it mounted up to heaven with the flame.

II. The *second* thing was, To shew the *things* wherein they mount up. Here we shall give you both a negative and a positive account of them.

1*st*, We propose to give you a *negative* account of these things.

1. They do not mount up in *airy speculations:* some mount up only in airy motions; they have a great deal of head-knowledge, but no heart-love to the truth: *They receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for which cause, God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. The devil himself knows God and Christ; but hath no love to God or Christ in his heart: there may be much speculative knowledge, where there is no saving grace.

2. They do not mount up in *sinful curiosity*, to pry into

into the secrets of God ; *For secret things belong to God, to us the things that are revealed*, Deut. xxix. 29.—— Many mount up too far into the decrees of election and reprobation. Oh ! I fear I am a reprobate, say some. Alas ! Sirs, beware of such blasphemy ; as, if, forsooth, you were omniscient, like God ; and as if you had been upon the privy council of God from eternity, when he marked down the names of elect and reprobate : this is a thing cannot be known. In this side of time you cannot be sure you are a reprobate, as long as you are out of hell ; but I can give you assurance, better than the stability of heaven and earth, that if you truly repent of your sin, and flee to Christ, the only Saviour, you are no reprobate ; *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Isa. lv. 7. But if you will not part with sin, nor flee to Christ, you subscribe your own reprobation. Now, I say, the believer doth mount up in sinful curiosity, concerning the decree of election and reprobation ; but in so far as it is revealed to him, to *give all diligence to make his calling and election sure :* neither doth he pry curiously into the secrets of God's providence ; *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* Some have been very rash in telling when the day of judgment would be : we should not meddle with such secrets ; *For of that day and that hour knoweth no man*, Matt. xxv. 13.

3. They do not mount up in *self-conceit* and *self-estimation*, as some do, who mount up in the pride of their hearts ; God abhors the proud, and he will cast them down, let them mount up never so far : *He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*, James iv. 6.—— Pride was the sin of fallen angels ; they would be as high as God, *viz.* self-dependent : and therefore God casts them down. This was the ill lesson that the devil taught our first parents, *You shall be as gods* ; and they were taken with this bait to their overthrow and ruin ; and ever since, pride and self-conceit hath been natural to their posterity ; and hence it is, so much self

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is mixed with all our preaching, praying, communicating. But when the believer mounts, he mounts in some measure above self, and gets it trode under his feet in self-abasing, self-abhorring thoughts.

4. They do not mount up in *fits* and *starts of devotion*, in modes and pangs of affection in a transient way. Many professors, when they hear the word, they seem to be mounted up in joy; but what comes of it? It is but a flash, and like a land-flood. The stony-ground hearers may receive the *word with joy;* but *having no root*, they wither and dwindle to nothing, Luke viii. 6, 13. Some, when they hear of Christ's sufferings, and see him sacramentally crucified, it draws tears from their eyes, and they never mount further.

2*dly*, We come now to give a *positive* account of these things wherein the believer mounts up. Believers *mount up with wings as eagles*, in these following things, or the like.

1. They mount up in *spiritual-mindedness*, *contemplation*, and *holy meditation:* Hence says David, *My meditation of him shall be sweet*, Psalm civ. 34. Having got the Spirit, they mind the things of the Spirit; *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit: that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5. Their heart is set and bent to mind the *great mystery of godliness*, *God made manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *And to know the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ.* They do not suffer their thoughts to wander on the mountains of vanity.

2. They mount up in *high designs* and *intentions:* their ultimate design is the *glory of God*, and the *enjoyment of him*, which, you know, is *man's chief end.* This is the winged Christian's end: he mounts up in this high and holy end, and that in all his actions; in his *civil* actions, as in his buying and selling, travelling, labouring; and in his *sacred* actions; as his praying, reading, hearing, communicating; or, in his *relative* actions, what he doth as a father, master, servant, or child; and in his *natural* actions, *Whether he*

he eat or drink, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. At leaſt his ſhort-coming herein is matter of ſorrow and ſhame to him.

3. They mount up in *holy deſires*, ſaying with Job, *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his ſeat!* And their deſires are not like the *faint, languiſhing wiſh* of the wicked, ſuch as Balaam had; no, no: their deſires are *ſpiritual* and *ſincere*, ſuch as theſe ſpoke of, Iſa. xxvi. 9. *With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night; and with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee early.*—Their deſires are *ſtrong* and *fervent*, none but Chriſt will ſatisfy them; *What wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* ſaid Abraham, Geneſis xv. 2. So ſays the ſoul, mounting up towards God, O what what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go Chriſtleſs? It *pants after God, the living God.*—Their deſires are *reſtricted* to God and Chriſt alone; *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee*, Pſal. lxxiii. 25.—Their deſires are *dilated* on a whole God, and a whole Chriſt; *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, my God, my King*, Pſal. xvi. 2. They will have a whole God in all his eſſential perfections, and in all the relations he ſtands in to his people. They will have *this God for their God for ever and ever*, and for *their guide even unto death.* And they will have a whole Chriſt; Chriſt for ſanctification, as well as for ſalvation; yea, Chriſt for their all in all.

4. They mount up in *pious inclinations*: they have an averſion at ſin, at the ſinful pleaſures of this life; yea, they abhor them with Ephraim, *What have I any more to do with idols?* That is the language of the eagle-like believer; he hath a great inclination, a ſtrong bent of ſpirit after a God in Chriſt, as the top of his perfection, as the very ſpring of all his pleaſure, and as the magazine of all his treaſure, as the reſt of his ſoul; if the devil and his evil heart hath ſet him at any dif-

distance from God, his mind is restless till he return to him again; *Return to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*, Psalm cxvi. 7. The top-swarm, as it were, of his inclination mounts up this way.

5. He mounts up in *heavenly affections*: hence is that injunction, *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*, Col. iii. 2. He endeavours through grace, to have his affection some way corresponding with God's affection, so as to love *what* God loves, and hate *what* God hates; yea, to love *as* God loves, and to hate *as* God hates. God loves holiness with a strong and great love; so doth the believer. God hates sin *with a perfect hatred*; and so doth the believer, *I hate every false way*. See also, Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22.

6. They mount up in a *gospel-conversation*; so saith the apostle, *Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*, Philip. iii. 20.

7. The winged saint mounts up in a *heavenly walk*: as Enoch and Noah *walked with God*; so doth the winged soul, *whose strength is renewed; he runs without wearying, and walks without fainting on the Lord's way*. His heavenly walk discovers itself, 1. In his heavenly *words, they are seasoned with salt, and edifying*. And, 2. In his *actions*, wherein he studies sobriety, righteousness, and godliness in all the duties of religion, prayer, and praise. And, 3. In his *company*, for he can say with David, *I am a companion of all them that fear thee*, Psalm cxix. 63.

II. The next thing was, The *seasons* when it is that the believer, whose strength is renewed, doth mount up.

1. Whenever he gets the *new nature*, and the *disposition*; whenever he is converted, he *mounts up on wings as an eagle*. It is said of Paul, Acts ix. 11. whenever he was converted, *Behold, he prayeth*. think you Paul never prayed any before that time? Yea, many a prayer had he uttered, no doubt; for he pro-

fited in the Jewiſh religion, above many of his equals in his own nation: he had learned to ſay his prayers as well as the beſt of them; but he never prayed ſpiritually and acceptably before; he had never mounted up to heaven in his prayer before: but now, *behold he prays;* behold he mounts up, whenever he is converted.

2. He mounts up to heaven, *all the days of his life*, after his converſion; he is ſtill making ſome progreſs heaven-ward; whatever backſets he may get by ſin and Satan, now and then, yet he gets up again, and ſtill aſcends nearer and nearer heaven; *Nevertheleſs, I am continually with thee*, Pſal. lxxiii. 23. Whatever I do, I endeavour ſtill to be up on the mount with God. David would have both day and night ſpent with God; *The Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life*, Pſal. xlii. 8. He went to bed, as it were, with God in his arms; *For he remembered him upon his bed, and meditated on him in the night-watches;* and *his ſoul was ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs:* and when wakened out of his ſleep he found him in his arms; *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee.*

3. He mounts up, when he gets a *freſh gale* and *new influences* of the Spirit. The believer, at his loweſt, is like a ſhip wind-bound, lying at anchor, but ready to ſet ſail whenever the wind is fair; he can but make ſmall progreſs with the oars of diligence, when the wind and tide is againſt him. O Sirs, if there be any gale of the Spirit blowing among you this day, then mount, mount, mount; you may make more progreſs then in an hour, than you will do without it in many a year, yea, in a whole life-time.

4. The believer uſes to mount up with wings about a *communion-time;* nothing leſs will ſerve him than to come to BETHEL, the *houſe of God;* he will go into the chambers of preſence, and never reſt till he be at the end of his flight. Where is that, ſay you? Doth he mount to a *communion-table;* nay, he muſt be farther: doth he mount to the top of *duties* and *ordinances;* nay, he muſt be farther: doth he mount to *heaven;*

heaven ; nay, he must be farther yet.——Strange! Where would he flee next! Indeed, he would flee into the *heart* of Christ ; *Set me as a seal upon thine heart :* yea, and which is more yet, he would not only have himself in Christ's heart, but he would have Christ in his heart ; *Christ in him the hope of glory.* And what would he do with him when he hath got him there? O then, saith he, *He shall ly all night between my breasts ;* if I can, I will keep him all the night-time of this life, which is but a night, *Till the day* of eternity *break, and the shadows fly away.*

5. The believer mounts up on wings as an eagle at the *day of death ;* then he soars aloft ; *This night thou shalt be with me in paradise.* It is said of the adder, that when she is old, she goes through some strait passage, and leaves her old skin in the passage, and thereby renews her vigour and life. This passage of death is strait, and uneasy to the body, which, like the adder's skin is left in the way ; and not without much pain and difficulty to it : but the soul passeth through without any harm ; and the next moment mounts up to her state of immortality and happiness : then the believer mounts up indeed to the *general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant ;* yea, then he is mounted up a *pillar in the temple of his God.*

6. The believer will mount up at the *day of judgment* as with eagle's wings ; then will he flee up to meet Christ in the air ; *Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord,* 1 Thess. iv. 17.——You see then when the believer mounts up.

IV. The *fourth* thing is, To speak to the *manner* how the believer mounts up, *He mounts up with wings as an eagle.* In whatever respects the eagle mounts up, the same way doth the believer.

1. The eagle mounts up *freely* and *naturally ;* God gives it a mounting nature : *Doth the eagle mount up at*

thy command? says the Lord to Job, chap. xxxix. 27.; nay, it is by the instinct which the Lord hath given it; so that it is natural to it. Thus the believer mounts up naturally after God hath given him the new heart; it is natural to him to be mounting towards God: when the hypocrite mounts, he is forced up contrary to his natural tendency, as it were, like a stone cast up into the air; it is not natural to it to fly up, but rather to fall down: but the believer mounts up naturally and freely.

2. The eagle mounts up *highly;* she flies higher than other birds: she makes her nest on high, on some inaccessible rock; not like the ostrich, that leaves her eggs in the sand, as some leave their souls here on earth: but these spiritual eagle believers, these heavenly birds, they fly high, even to the Rock of ages; and hence their daily desire is, *Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*

3. The eagle mounts up *strongly, vehemently,* and *violently;* it is a strong bird, and when it hath got the prey, it flies with violence. Thus doth the believer mount up; *For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* With such earnestness and intentness doth he mount up towards heaven, that no difficulty in the way shall hinder him.

4. The eagle mounts up *swiftly* and *suddenly:* this follows upon the other; for its strength and violence in flying, infers celerity: so doth the believer, under the lively influences of the Spirit. O how quick is his motion! *Or ever he is aware, his soul makes him like the chariots of Aminadab*——It is a speedy flight, that the believer makes towards Christ; he mounts swiftly.

5. The eagle mounts up *gradually:* tho' its flight be strong and swift, yet it is gradual; it comes not to the utmost extent of its motion, but by degrees: so the believer mounts gradually; he goes *from strength to strength, till he appear before God in Zion,* Ps. lxxxiv. 7. He flies still higher and higher; and so the object of his aim draws nearer and nearer to him, while he comes

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to more and more knowledge of God, and more and communion with him, till faith and hope land in vision and fruition.

6. The eagle mounts up *frequently* and *daily;* and, in respect of its mounting dispositon, *constantly:* so it is with the believer, he is always mounting; he hath still a mounting disposition, and he is constantly endeavouring to be actually mounting. The carnal professor never mounts up, but about the time of a communion, or the time of some sore affliction or conviction; and whenever these seasons are over, he goes as fast down as he went up: but it is the believer's trade of life to be mounting on week-days, as well as on Sabbath-days; and on ordinary Sabbaths, as well as communion Sabbaths.

V. The next thing is, To shew the *reasons* why the believer, who hath his strength renewed, mounts up on wings like an eagle.

1. Because he hath an eagle's *nature.* I said before, that the believer mounts up naturally; why, because he hath an eagle's nature. It is the natural disposition of the eagle to fly upward: so the believer hath a disposition to mount up to God, he being a new creature; *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,* 2 Cor. v. 17.——This new nature ascends to heaven from whence it descended; the old nature goes always downward, but the new nature mounts upwards. If you want the new nature, you want the mounting disposition.

2. He mounts up on wings like an eagle; because he hath an eagle's *eye:* so the believer, he can see that invisible Sun, which no natural eye can attain to: *The poor in spirit, and pure in heart, shall see God,* Matt. v. 3, 8. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him,* 1 Cor. ii. 14.: but the believer knowing the mind of Christ, sees farer than the world; he sees *the King in his beauty, and the land afar off.* When he sees these things, he cannot but mount up to them; *He endures, as seeing him who is invisible,* Heb. ii. 27. He is far sighted;

Abraham

Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day afar off, and he saw it, and was glad. This is that blessed object, which every believing soul doth see, even when he is in this world.

3. He mounts up on wings like an eagle; because he hath his *nest* on high, like an eagle: no wonder then he flies up, for his nest; I mean, his seat, his food, his treasure, his heart, his head, his all is above. —His *seat* is above: the believing eagle cannot find himself safe while here below; therefore he flies to the *Rock of ages*, and there he sits.—His *food* is above: Christ is his food; *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* Now, his food being above; *Where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* —His *treasure* is above: he hath *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is reserved in heaven for him;* and up we must to visit his inheritance.—His *heart* is above, where his treasure is; yea, Christ hath gotten his heart a-keeping; and he must be where his heart is.—And, in a word, his *head* is above: and must not the members be where the head is? And must not the stones of the building be where the foundation is? Christ is the head corner-stone.—His *all* is above: Christ is *all in all to him;* and therefore, mount he must; for this eagle hath a rich nest above.

4. He mounts up with wings as an eagle, because his *strength* is renewed, like the eagle's; *Who satisfies the soul with good things; so that thy strength is renewed like the eagle*, Psal. ciii. 5. Therefore, having renewed his strength, he mounts up on wings like the eagle. Some say the eagle is renewed, when it casts its old feathers, and gets new ones; so the believer gets the old feathers of corruption removed, and *puts on the new man*, Eph. iv. 24. Others say the eagle's youth is renewed, when, its stomach being thirsty, it drinks the blood of the prey; and so the believer gets his strength renewed, by drinking the blood of Christ by faith. Eph. iv. 13. *It is in the unity of the faith, that he comes to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* If you have got a drink of the blood

blood of Chriſt this day, to be ſure your ſtrength will be renewed; and if your ſtrength be renewed, you cannot but be mounting up on wings as an eagle.—Here we might ſhew the influence between the renewing of the believer's ſtrength, and his mounting up; but this is eaſily perceived, eſpecially by theſe that know it experimentally.

VI. The *ſixth* thing in the general method, is the *application.* Is it ſo, *That believers, who, in waiting on the Lord, have their ſtrength renewed, do mount upon wings as eagles?* Waving ſeveral uſes that might be made, hence,

1*ſt*, May we not ſee ground to *lament*, that ſo few are mounting up as on eagle's wings at this day. Many peoples mind are no-ways with God; *God is not in all their thoughts.*——Some mount up only in vain thoughts: and, Oh! *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you?* Jer. iv. 14. Some ſpends their thoughts on worldly affairs, the profits, pleaſures, riches, and honours of it; they *mind earthly things.* Some ſeem to mount, and they mount a little, but they come down again; like Herod, who heard John gladly, but ſoon did he fall. Some, when they are young, they are very religious, but their religion is eaſily rubbed off again; *They begin in the Spirit, and end in the fleſh.*—Some mount no farther than reſtraining grace, while the Lord withholds them, as he did Abimelech from ſinning againſt him; but they want reſtraining grace; they know not what it is to have *the love of God conſtraining them.* Many, inſtead of mounting in time of ordinances, the devil and the world run away with their hearts; or if they get any kindly frame about a ſacrament, whenever they go home, they forget all, and give looſe reigns again to their thoughts and words, to their affections and actions.

2*dly*, We may apply it for *examination* and *trial.* Try whether you be mounting Chriſtians or not: to be ſure, you are mounting or ſinking. You need to try after as well as before you go to the Lord's table.

How

How ſhall I know, ſay you, *whether or not I be mounting up as on eagle's wings?* I ſhall keep by the ſimile, and give you the following marks.

1. If you be mounting up on wings like an eagle, then God hath opened the *iron cage*, and ſet you at liberty.——While a man is in a ſtate of nature, or in legal bondage, he is like a bird in an iron cage; he cannot mount, till God come and knock off his fetters, and looſe his bands, and *proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon doors to them that are bound;* and ſo lets them out to the free air, that they may fly. If you be a mounting ſoul, you will know ſomething more or leſs of this; you have found yourſelf in the iron cage, in the devil's claws: and you have found the Lord *turning you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;* at leaſt, you can ſay, in ſome meaſure, *Once I was blind, now I ſee;* once I was bound, and now I am ſet at liberty.

2. If you be mounting up on eagle's wings, then you will have ſomething of an eagle's *appetite; Where the carcaſe is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* The eagle, it is ſaid, doth very greedily devour her prey; and if you be a true eagle, you will eat greedily of the fleſh and blood of the Son of God. It is not a little of this heavenly carcaſe that ſatisfies the believing eagle; he muſt feed upon it greedily, and daily; yea, and live upon it conſtantly: *The life that he lives, is by faith on the Son of God.*

3. If you be mounting up on eagles wings, then you have got ſomething of an eagle's *heart:* the eagle is a noble kind of creature, diſdaining to prey upon mean birds.——We have a common Latin proverb, *Aquila non captat muſcas;* [that is, The eagle doth not catch flies.] It preys only upon creatures worthy of it: ſo, the noble generous ſoul of the mounting believer will not ſtoop to theſe things that are inferior to him, or unworthy of him; no kingdom will pleaſe him, but the *kingdom of heaven;* no heritage, but the *heritage of Jacob;* no rock, but the *Rock of ages;* no portion, but a *portion in the Son of Jeſſe.*

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4. If you be mounting up on eagles wings, then you will be daily *casting off your old feathers;* such as, the old feather of *self-righteousness:* you will never allow yourself to mount up with the wing of your own righteousness.——You will know that the devil clipt old Adam's wings; yea, that by the fall he brake his wings, and that never one since the fall could mount up to heaven on the wing of this old covenant-righteousness, unless it was the double eagle, if I may so express it, the God-man in two natures, and one person, who came to bring in everlasting righteousness: under this great wing, do all the little eagles flock, as the hen's chickens do under her wings, desiring to be found in Christ, *Not having their own righteousness, which is after the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,* Phil. iii. 9.—And as they will be casting the old feather of their own self-righteousness, so the old feather of *self-conceit.* O the mounting believer thinks little of himself; so little, that he thinks nothing of himself. If *nothing* could be *divided*, he is LESS *than nothing* in his own sight; and if nothing could be *disparaged*, he is WORSE *than nothing;* he is the *least of saints*, and the *chief of sinners*, as Paul was in his own eyes: he casts down all his attainments, all his enjoyments, all his qualifications, all duties at Christ's feet as nothing; that so he may have nothing to be a weight to keep him from mounting up.—In a word, he casts off the old feathers of *sin* and *corruption* daily; also enmity, unbelief, hypocrisy, carnality; he seeks to have these works of the devil destroyed wholly. It is said, that there is an antipathy between eagles and serpents; so there is a continual antipathy between the believing eagle and the old serpent; and all the serpent's brood are abominable to him.

5. If you be mounting up on eagle's wings, then you will be *cloathed with the sun;* the sun will be big in your eye. The mounting eagle gets a view of the sun; and the higher it mounts, the bigger doth the sun appear. If you be a mounting Christian, you have got above the clouds of darkness and unbelief now and

then, and got a view of the Sun of righteouſneſs; and he hath been ſo big in your eye, as to darken the glory of all created objects; yea, ſo big in your eye, that you have ſeen him to be *all in all;* to be the all of the covenant, the all of the ſacraments, the all of the goſpel: you have ſeen him to be all things, and above all things, and better than all things: you have ſeen him to be heaven itſelf, yea, more than heaven, yea, more than ten thouſand heavens: you have ſeen all things to be in him; election, redemption, juſtification, ſanctification, grace, glory, and all.——O Sirs, to *you that believe, he is precious*, and a *pearl of great price.*

6. If you be mounting up on wings as eagles, you will be *cloathed with the ſun*, and you will have the *moon* of this world *under your feet*, Revel. xii. 1. The mounting eagle being above the clouds, ſees the ſun big above, and the earth little below; and the higher it mounts, the leſs will the earth appear. O the mounting believer thinks little of the world; if we were as high as the ſtars, we would not ſee the earth; the higher we fly to heaven, the more doth the nothingneſs of the earth appear to us.——The believer ſometimes mounts up ſo high, that he flies out of ſight; the world is out of ſight of him, and out of his ſight and mind alſo; when he is on the mount of communion with God, glad would he be that he might never come down to the world again, as Peter on the mount of transfiguration, *It is good for us to be here.*

3*dly*, This doctrine may be applied for *exhortation*, which I ſhall form in a ſhort addreſs. 1. In a word of *terror* to the ſoul that *never* mounted. 2. A word of *comfort* to the *mounting* ſoul. 3. A word of *counſel* to the *hovering* ſoul.

[1.] A word of *terror* to you that *never* mounted up to heaven towards Chriſt. Alas! what ſhall we ſay to you? You are not like eagles, but like filthy black ravens, that do not mount heaven-ward, nor look upon the ſun, but wander to and fro upon the earth, as Noah's raven did, and feed upon dung-hills

and

and ſordid things; you cannot fly to heaven, but flutter upon the earth: but if you do not mount up to heaven, the curſe of God will come upon you; all the curſes mentioned, Deut. xxvi. 15,—20. You will be *curſed in your baſket, and in your ſtore; curſed in your outgoings and incomings.* The curſe of God will be in your houſe, Prov. iii. 23. *The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked*; that is, the man that doth not mount up to Chriſt by faith, nor mount up in the ways of God. The curſe of God will be in your prayers and duties; *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God:* your ſacrifice will be curſed to you: the word you hear will be a curſe to you, it will be a ſavour and ſeal of death, and not of life to you, 2 Cor. ii. 16. The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper will be curſed to you; for there *you eat and drink damnation to yourſelf.* If you never mounted by faith, and yet went to a communion-table, you have been eating and drinking God's curſe, which you will never vomit up again, unleſs you mount up to Chriſt with the wing of faith. What ſhall I ſay? If you do not mount, Chriſt himſelf will be curſed to you; *We preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.* If you do not mount, you will ſtumble into hell; and Chriſt himſelf will be a ſtumbling-block over which you will fall and break your neck, and periſh for ever. O then, do not tempt Chriſt by lying ſtill in your ſin and unbelief, when you ſhould be mounting. See a remarkable word, 1 Cor. x. 9. *Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents.* If you do mount, with the eye of faith, towards Chriſt, the myſtical brazen ſerpent, you will be deſtroyed with worſe ſerpents than the Iſraelites were: he will let looſe the old ſerpent the devil; he will let looſe the young ſerpent, your conſcience, upon you, and both theſe will tear you to pieces to all eternity; beſides, the fiery ſerpent of God's everlaſting vengeance: if you do not mount, God will caſt you down into the dungeon of hell, to live among all theſe ſerpents, as long as God lives. Think not theſe to be words of courſe, man, woman; I am not jeſting with you; nay, I de-

clare to you in the name of the everlasting God, that if you do not mount up to Christ, you shall go down to hell with the devil ; Matth. xxv. 30. *The unprofitable servant shall be cast into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Rev. xiv. 10. *They shall have no rest. Consider this, all ye that forget God,* and forget to mount up to him.

[2.] A word of *comfort* to the *mounting* soul.—Are you a mounting eagle? Then you shall be *blessed* in your outgoing and incoming : God's blessing will be in your house ; *For he blesseth the habitation of the just :* you will be blessed in your prayers and duties : *For the prayer of the upright is his delight :* the word will be blessed to you ; it will be a river of life to comfort you, poor believing eagle, when you droop your wings : the sacraments are blessed to you ; the communion-table is a foretaste of the fruit of the *vine, which you shall drink for ever new in your Father's kingdom,* where *you shall be for ever with the Lord :* you are happier than the tongues of men and angels can tell.—And as the mounting soul is blessed, so he is *safe :* as long as he is mounting, he is out of the reach of this world's misery ; safe against death itself; yea, safe against the wrath of God; you are above all this, for you are mounted up to the love of God, and that is above his wrath. O believer, if you be mounting, keep up your head, and be always mounting, till you come to the throne of God, and of the Lamb. O mount, mount, mount, till you come to heaven, to the top of the tree of life, where the birds of paradise shall sing, *Hallelujah, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* The eagle is never in danger, but when she is on earth : we are never in danger when we are in Christ, but till we fly down to the earth ; therefore, seeing God hath renewed your strength to mount up as on eagles wings, O soar aloft ; look down with a generous disdain upon the world, and the vanities thereof, and keep your heart up in heaven.

[3.] A word of *counsel* to the *hovering* soul. Perhaps there are some hovering sinners, and some hovering saints here.

(1) As

(1.) As for hovering *ſinners* that never yet mounted, they have ſome thoughts of mounting; but ſome objections come in their way, and they are in a hover.

OBJECT. *Oh!* ſay you, *you are deſiring us to go about a duty we are not able to do; alas! I am a poor thing, not able to fly up to heaven: how is that poſſible to me that want the wing of faith and love?*

ANSW. 1. Up, you muſt go, or elſe go down to the bottomleſs pit: God commands you to mount; and if you be not able, conſider whence your inability flows; the fall brake your wings; *For God made man upright, but he found out many inventions:* thou haſt diſabled thyſelf in Adam, therefore God may condemn thee.

2. The reaſon why you do not mount up, is, becauſe you are wilful; *You will not come to me that you might have life*, John v. 40.——Your weakneſs flows from your wilfulneſs; if the weakneſs of your will were taken away, then you would mount up with eaſe.

3. Do what you can to fly up; if you cannot fly, endeavour to *run without wearying;* if you cannot run, endeavour to *walk without fainting:* if you cannot walk becauſe of your broken leg, then will you creep to the phyſician with it, and hold out the broken leg, the withered arm to him; if you cannot creep, will you cry to him; *He hath not ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye me in vain:* if you cannot cry, will ye look to him; *Look to me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth:* if you cannot look to him, will you long for him; for, *He ſatisfies the longing ſoul:* ſigh, and ſob, and groan after him. And, if after all, you think you can do nothing, becauſe of your abſolute weakneſs; then, O will you *wait on the Lord, and you ſhall renew your ſtrength;* wait on him in the uſe of means; ly at the pool, and you cannot tell how ſoon you ſhall get ſtrength to mount: *Wait, I ſay, on the Lord.*

OBJECT. *Alas!* ſay ſome, *my mounting time is gone; my day of grace is paſt; I have been a long hearer of the goſpel, and many a call have I ſlighted; I fear Chriſt will*

will never take pains on me, to make me mount up to heaven.

ANSW. To you I would say, 1. O how dare you meddle with God's decree? I said something to this already; mind this is a stratagem of Satan, to keep you from coming to Christ. I have read that the devil said once to a man, "You need not serve God any "more, for you will not win to heaven." The man was troubled at this: But what was his answer? "If "I cannot win to God in heaven, I shall have as much "of God as I can on earth." O man, you will cheat the devil effectually, if you tell him in earnest, I will take all of God that I can now, though I should never get any more of him.

2. Are you not waiting on God in ordinances: and sorrowing at your heart, that you have sinned so much, and slighted Christ so long? Then your day of grace is not past, it is yet time to mount. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;* and it is, perhaps, now or never. O young sinner, old sinner, your mounting time may be gone before you get another call. Death will dismount you from these high privileges in a little, and then you shall never mount again; but sink, sink, sink for ever in fire and brimstone.

(2.) There may be some hovering *saints* here, who know what it is to have mounted some time a day, but now they are fallen down again; gladly would they mount, but many things hinder them from mounting.

OBJECT. 1. *Alas!* say some, *the woful* WORLD *keeps me from mounting; the losses, and crosses, and temptations of the world are a clog; whenever I go home, I will meet with something that will draw me down by the heels again, as it were.*

ANSW. O believer, be not discouraged, but set a stout heart to a steep mountain: oppose the love of the world as much as you can; and see vanity written on its forehead: you know that communion with God is better than all the enjoyments of this life; cast off these things that trouble and afford vexation to you,

O let

O let not the world get into your heart; if the world mount up in your heart, it will indeed draw you down, that you ſhall not mount up to heaven. Beware of your graceleſs friends, their carnal walk and converſation may rob you of all your ſpirituality in half an hour, and ſpoil a good communion in two minutes. O Sirs, be as little in their company as you can; and when you are obliged to be with them, yet let your heart be always mounting, and giving a ſtolen look to Chriſt—But, perhaps, there are other things in the world alſo that keep you from mounting, and keep you down with diſcouragement: you ſee things going all wrong in the church, grievances lying heavy upon us; zeal decaying, and iniquity abounding; and the like. O how can I get mounted up under ſuch diſcouragements. As to all which, I ſhall only ſay, you have the more need to mount up to heaven, that you ſee things ſo far wrong here below.

OBJECT. 2. *But, Oh!* ſay you, *there is another thing that hinders me from mounting; I have a* STONE *in my heart that bears me down; the dead weight of corruption that draws me downward; how can I mount with ſuch a rock on my back, ſuch a heavy ſtony heart in my breaſt.*

ANSW. O believer, that art groaning under the ſenſe of your heart-evils, will you go to God with your ſtony heart; none can cure the ſpiritual gravel but God himſelf; he can cut the ſtone out of the hard-hearted ſinner, and he hath promiſed to do it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh.* O Sirs, go and tell him, that it bears you down when you would mount up to heaven, and ſeek to have the ſtony heart ſoftened in the blood of Chriſt; for Chriſt's blood is a heart-ſoftening blood; *Look to him whom you have pierced and mourn:* if you but mount up with your eye to him, it will melt your ſtony heart; and then the melted heart will be a mounting heart. Alas! ſay you, I have a *worm* at my heart, *Iniquity prevails againſt me*, and this is a heavy thing that bears me down, ſorely, down; and, I think, it will wear me down to hell: mine iniquities are a burden; they ſink me down, terribly,

ribly, down into the mire. But what shall I do, I will never win up, I think, from under this burden; Poor soul, cast your burden upon Christ; *God laid on him the iniquity of us all. Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee.* Doth the *guilt* of sin burden you? Look to him who is made of God to you *righteousness.* Doth the *power* of sin burden you? Look to him who is made of God to you *sanctification. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

OBJECT. 3. *Oh!* say some, *there is another thing that hinders me from mounting up; the* DEVIL *steps in between me and heaven, between Christ and me, and so I cannot get mounted; he assaults me sore with many sad temptations, he scars me from duty, and tempts me to sin.*

ANSW. Poor believer, be comforted; it seems you are not on Satan's side; it seems you are come out of his camp; and therefore he assaults you so sore: mean time, O endeavour to mount up notwithstanding of all temptations; for, within a little, *God shall bruise Satan under your feet,* Rom. xvi. 20. The believing eagle shall get day about with the devil, and tread upon this old serpent. Again, tell me, hast thou not wings to fight against the devil, as they say the eagle doth? when any come to take her young, then she fights with her wings. So do you fight with the wing of faith, that is the shield that *quenches the fiery darts of the devil.* The devil's darts cannot pierce the believer's wing of faith. Fight with the wing of love; love is a strong wing, like coals of fire, it hath a most vehement flame; this fire of love will burn the devil's darts that he throws at you; the love of Christ will constrain you to resist him boldly, *But, alas!* say you, *for all that, I cannot fight; my faith is feeble, and my love is faint;* Then I only say to you, O poor soul, go to Christ; Christ is like the old eagle that helps the young ones; yea, Christ takes the young eagles on his wings, Deut. xxxii. 11, 12. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings,*

wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him; and there was no strange god with him. Exodus xix. 4. *I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you to myself.* Christ will carry you on his wings; and for your encouragement, know that he hath fought with the devil already, and overcome him, he hath overcome *principalities and powers;* yea, by death he *hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

OBJECT. 4. And *lastly, Alas!* say you, *there is another thing yet that hinders me from mounting; I would not think much of the common enemies of my salvation, sin, Satan, and the world; I know they will do their utmost to keep me out of heaven: but, oh!* GOD *himself is pressing me down, and that is saddest of all, he doth not give the wonted communication of his grace, nor strength to mount: though I had habitual grace that will not do, I must have auxiliary grace.*

ANSW. It may be, when you got additional grace at the last communion, you have sinned it away; and no wonder, when you *turn the grace of God into wantonness,* that the Lord make you go empty-handed — But again, he may do this to let you see, that habitual grace is not sufficient, in order to your mounting up to heaven, without actual grace; *It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.*—However, know that God is a sovereign God, and he will let you know that he is so, by giving you new supplies of grace, and withdrawing them again when he pleases; but wait on him, and you *shall renew your strength.*

OBJECT. "But, oh! how can I mount, when he "not only denies his grace, but HIDES his face from "me? The eagle mounts towards the body of the sun, "but my sun is covered with a cloud, and I go mourning without the Sun. A day bird cannot fly in the "night; and, alas! how should I mount in the dark "night of desertion?"

ANSW. It may me you have hid your face from God, and that makes him hide his face from you: you have sinned away his presence, by turning away

from his presence; or, perhaps, God doth this for the trial of your faith, love, and patience. However it be, you must exercise your wings of faith and love, and mount up notwithstanding that you be in the dark; *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay* himself *upon his God*, Isaiah l. 10. The spouse was busy even when Christ was gone, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?*

OBJECT. "Oh! but how can I mount, when he "is not only an absent, but an *angry* God; I see no-"thing but surly looks in his countenance; and he is "shooting arrows against me; yea, *His arrows stick* "*fast in me, and his hand presses me sore;* when I mount "up he shoots me down with his arrows; *For the ar-*"*rows of the Almighty are within me:* and when my "wings are wounded, down I fall."

ANSW. God may do so to humble you; you must be humbled; and the more humble and low you are, the higher you shall be advanced, and mount up the higher after your humiliation: never was the believer highest than after he was lowest, James iv. 10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up;* and remember how you may meet with barbed arrows, poisoned arrows of God's anger, and yet all in love: *In a little wrath have I hid myself from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.* Isaiah liv. 10. *For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee.* You shall at last find all these things well ordered. What think you, when you shall come to heaven, and Christ say to you, Welcome, believer, when I hid my face, did I not deal kindly with you? When I shot the arrows into your heart, did I not deal kindly with you? And the believer will then say, Indeed, Lord, thou hast *done all things well:* all is well that ends well.

OBJECT. "Alas! but I think the Lord will *kill* "me with his arrows; and will I fly to heaven, if he "kill me?"

ANSW.

ANSW. There is no fear that your kind Lord will kill you; but though he ſhould, yet make uſe of your wings, and fly to him, as Job, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* I read of a ſparrow, that when purſued by a hawk, flew into Xenocrates' boſom, his words were, *Non oportet ſupplicem prodere;* "It were "barbarous to betray a poor ſupplicant." If you fly to God's boſom, no fear that he kill you; when his wrath purſues you, he is but chaſing you into his boſom: therefore let nothing hinder you from mounting.

The Lord himſelf engage you to wait on him, that you may *renew* your *ſtrength*, and *mount up on wings as eagles.*

SERMON XCVII.

The RIVER of LIFE, proceeding out of the THRONE of GOD, and of the LAMB*.

REVEL. xxii. 1.

And he shewed me a pure river of water clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

AT the last sacramental action, that fell to my share here, I took occasion to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as *the Lamb in the midst of the throne*, Revel. vii. 17 †. And now I would speak a little, as the Lord may assist, of the *great blessings* that proceed from that throne, to the everlasting salvation and consolation of all the redeemed.

Some understand all that is said in the two last chapters of this book, of the *state of the church* even here on *earth*, in the glory of the latter days. Others view it as a representation of the perfect and *triumphant state* of the church in *heaven*. I reckon it safest to exclude neither of these; and apprehend it takes in the heavenly state of the church, and the happiness thereof, commenced in time here, and consummate through eternity hereafter.——That glorious state begins here, since grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace. Now, this happy state is described here, in allusion to the earthly paradise, that was lost by the sin of the first Adam, as another, a better paradise, restored by the righteousness of the second Adam.

* This sermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Dunfermline, July 6. 1735. It hath undergone six impressions.

† See this Sermon, printed above, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXIV.

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In this verſe you ſee a revelation made to John of the *river* of paradiſe; and by this river I underſtand the *Spirit*, and all *ſpiritual bleſſings*: for ſo I find the Spirit frequently in ſcripture repreſented, as a river, or a flood of water; Iſaiah xliv. 3. *I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.*—— What is that? Even *my Spirit*, and *my bleſſing*; as it is explained in the words immediately following.—— But then, you have the *quality* of this river; it is *a* PURE *river of water of life*, CLEAR *as cryſtal.* All the ſtreams of earthly comforts are muddy and polluted, and polluting; but theſe are pure, clear, healing, and refreſhing; giving life, and preſerving life for ever to them that drink thereof.—You have the *riſe* of this river, or whence it flows and proceeds, namely, *Out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.* The Spirit, and all the bleſſings and comforts of grace and glory, proceed from a God in Chriſt. As the Spirit, with reference to his perſonal property, proceeds from the Father and the Son; ſo, with reference to his office in the œconomy or redemption, he, as a Spirit of all grace and comfort, proceeds like *a pure cryſtal river out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb*; the Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings being from God, thro' the mediation of the Lamb. But I ſhall further explain the words upon the proſecution of the following doctrine.

OBSERV. *That the living Spirit of God, communicating all the bleſſings of everlaſting life, graciouſly here, and glorioufly hereafter, proceeds, like a pure cryſtal river, out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

And here I ſhall, as the Lord may pleaſe to aſſiſt, eſſay to do the following things.

I. Offer ſome *remarks* for clearing and confirming the doctrine.

II. Obſerve the *property* and *quality* of the water of this river.

III. Shew what may be *imported* in its being ſaid to *proceed out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

IV. En-

IV. Enquire whence it is, or assign the *reasons* why this river of life is said to *proceed* out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

V. Deduce some inference for the *application.*

I. We are to offer some *remarks* for clearing, confirming, and illustrating the doctrine.

Remark 1. "That *communion* with God in Christ, in "his blessings and comforts at his table, whether a- "bove or below, is by his Spirit." For, as *through* Christ *we have access to the Father by one Spirit*, Eph. ii. 18.; so all the blessings and comforts of the new covenant are commmunicated from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost: and hence we enjoy the *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the *love of God*, through him, in the *communion of the Holy Ghost*, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Remark 2. "That all spiritual blessings, thus com- "munication, are *everlasting.*" They are the blessings of everlasting life, begun in grace here, and consummate in glory hereafter. God himself, the prime and principal blessing, is the everlasting God; and the everlasting light, the everlasting life, the everlasting heaven and happiness of his people. And all the streams of blessings that flow from this fountain of living waters are everlasting. For example, is *peace* a stream of this river? Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* This peace is everlasting: and hence departed saints are said to *enter into peace* whenever they die, Isa. lvii. 2. Peace here enters into them, and there they enter into peace.—Is *pardon of sin* a stream of this river? Yea, *We have redemption thro' his blood, even the forgiveness of sin*, Eph. i. 7.; and this pardon is everlasting: and it is said of the inhabitants of heaven, *The people that dwell there, shall be forgiven their iniquity*, Isa. xxxiii. 24. Here they are pardoned, and there the pardon is lengthened out to eternity.—Is *sanctification* and *holiness* a stream? Yea, *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image.* Well, it is an everlasting blessing, for in heaven it is perfected; *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he*

he is, 1 John iii. 2.—Again, Is the *life of comfort* here a ſtream? Yea, we joy in God through Chriſt. This bleſſing is everlaſting, and therefore called *everlaſting conſolation*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 16. And hence the Comforter is ſaid to *abide in us for ever*, John xvi. 25. Even when the ſenſible comfort is withdrawn, yet the Comforter abideth for ever.—Again, Is the begun life of *communion with God* a ſtream of this river of the water of life? What is this fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, but the beginning of everlaſting communion?—In a word, Is *grace* a ſtream of this river of the water of life? What is the life of grace here, but the beginning of the life of glory, which is everlaſting, and commenced whenever the ſoul believes in Chriſt? *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.*——Thus you may ſee what I mean by the bleſſings of everlaſting life, to be enjoyed graciouſly here, and glorioufly hereafter, called *the water of life* in the text. And ſo far I have here deſignedly prevented myſelf the neceſſity of explaining much further this *water of life*, or the *ſtreams* of this river.

Remark 3. "That the Spirit of God, as the great "bleſſing of the covenant, and all the other ſpiritual "bleſſings of everlaſting life, are compared frequently "to *water* in ſcripture, John iv. 14. and 10. verſe "compared." There Chriſt is ſaid to give us *living water*; and again, *The water that I ſhall give him that drinketh it, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, And John vii. 37. *If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly*, out of his very heart and ſoul, *ſhall flow rivers of living water.* This he ſpeaks of the ſpirit. But I inſiſt not on all the inſtances I might offer; only the Spirit and his influences, graces, comforts, and bleſſings, may be on many accounts compared to water. I inſiſt not upon the parallel; only, as water is for quenching of thirſt, waſhing of ſtains, cooling of heats, healing of wounds, ſoftening of hard earth, and fructifying of barren earth;

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ſo the Spirit, in his various influences and operations, is of manifold ſuch like uſe to the ſouls of all his people.

Remark 4. "That this river of water of life, that "waters the church, militant and triumphant, with "all ſpiritual and everlaſting bleſſings, *proceeds* out of "the throne of God, and of the Lamb: I mean, the "Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son." Not only doth he ſo, as he is the third perſon of the glorious Trinity, and that by an eternal and ineffable proceſſion; but alſo, as he is clothed with the peculiar and glorious office of applying the purchaſed redemption. He comes forth from the Father and the Son by a voluntary ſubordination.——This is plain from ſeveral ſcriptures, particularly, John xiv. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.* John xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me.* John xiv. 26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things.* And again, John xvi. 7,—14. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment. He will guide you into all truth. He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* Whence then ſhall we have a good communion with God this day?—Whence ſhall we have the Spirit, or any ſpiritual bleſſing and comfort? It is from the throne of God and of the Lamb: it is from the Father and the Son.—This water is from God, through the mediation of the Lamb.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, To point out ſome of the *qualities* of this great bleſſing, comprehending all other bleſſings of everlaſting life. The text calls it a *pure river of the water of life, clear as cryſtal;* where the water is deſcribed four ways, namely, from the

the *plenty*, the *purity*, the *virtue*, and the *ſplendor* of it.

1. It is deſcribed from the *plenty*, or great ſtore of it, and therefore it is called a RIVER. This is that *river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God*, Pſal. xlvi. 4. No pleaſures are like theſe that flow from the Spirit of God. *The fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy:* but here it is only the ſtreams of this river that we enjoy; but in heaven the river itſelf will be enjoyed. The holy Spirit is a river, not a ciſtern, to ſhew his infinite plenitude and fulneſs, and the great abundance of heavenly bleſſings that flow from him. Our Lord Jeſus hath received of this river above meaſure, and yet the river is as full as ever. All believers, in all ages, from the beginning of the world, thouſands and ten thouſands, have drawn out of it; yet it is ſtill an overflowing river. O let us bring all our empty pitchers here! For there is enough here for every ſon of Adam, if he would come; enough for time, and enough for eternity: the river is flowing by our door; O may we *draw water out of this well of ſalvation!*

2. It is deſcribed from its *purity*, it is a PURE *river*. The Spirit of God is a pure and holy Spirit: and all his bleſſings and comforts are pure and holy, purifying and ſanctifying bleſſings. A pool or a ſtanding water may be impure; but a river though it ſhould run thro' a loathſome ditch, will carry away the pollution of it: no man's heart, be it never ſo polluted, like a ſtinking ditch, but if a ſtream of this river be let into it, and have a free paſſage, it will carry away all the filth and pollution thereof. And why is it ſaid of heaven, Revel. xxii. 27. that *there ſhall in no-wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth?* Becauſe there is the river ever running. Here we have only the ſtreams running ſome times, but there is the river itſelf; the pure river, continually running. O let impure polluted ſouls come now to the ſtreams of this pure and purifying river, as they are running from Chriſt in a goſpel-diſpenſation; and never reſt till they win to the river of perfect purity.

3. It is described from the *quickening virtue* of it: it is a *pure river of water of* LIFE. This river of water is the living Spirit of God; the Spirit of life, that quickens whom he will: he hath life in himself, and by him dead souls are quickened, and made to live for ever. All earthly elementary waters have a beginning; but this river, the Spirit of God, is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning, and without end. Other rivers are fed by springs and fountains; but this river of the Spirit is himself the *fountain of living waters*, as well as a river. This river proceeds from God, and yet the river is God himself; *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are One.* Though God hath provided a channel of ordinances to convey some of the water of this river to us, for quickening and refreshing us; yet the river cannot be circumscribed or limited as it is in itself. O let dead souls conceive hope of life! here is the living and life-giving Spirit of God, to give the life of grace, the life of peace and pardon, the life of holiness and sanctification, the life of joy and consolation, the life of communion and fellowship with God, which are all the beginning and commencement of everlasting life, as I have already shewed.

4. This river of water is described from the *brightness*, *splendor*, and *glory* of it: it is CLEAR *as crystal*. This, I think, may point out both the pleasure and perspicuity of the river. What a pleasant river is the Spirit, in the everlasting emanation and flow of his influences and comforts! How sweetly do the redeemed drink of this *river of pleasure*, Psal xxxvi. 8. *In the presence of God there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*, Psal. xvi. 11. And what a perspicuous river is that of the Spirit, *clear as crystal?* The Spirit as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ*, makes clear discoveries as a crystal glass, or a crystaline transparent river. It is by the Spirit we *behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is the Spirit that glorifieth Christ, by shewing the things of Christ; he giveth clear discoveries of the glory of Christ, and the glory of God's perfections in him

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The Spirit of life is the Spirit of light, that giveth the fiducial vision here, and the beatifical vision hereafter.

III. The next thing proposed was, To shew what may be *imported* in this river being said to *proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

1. It imports, that God and the Lamb have but *one* and the *same throne*, from whence the river of the Spirit, and all spiritual blessings do proceed. Here are good news to us this day, when we are to commemorate the sufferings of the Lamb of God; that, as the Lamb that was slain upon the cross is now sitting upon the throne, so that God and the Lamb have not two thrones, but one and the same throne. The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb, and the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God, Rev. iii. 21. *I am set down with my Father in his throne.* He *is the Lamb in the midst of the throne* of God: but of this I have formerly treated.

2. It imports, that God and the Lamb have but *one* and the *same Spirit.* The river *proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Lamb; and the Spirit of the Lamb is the Spirit of God. Happy they that have the Spirit of Christ in them, for the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of both of the Father and of the Son? *All things that the Father hath are mine*, says Christ, John xvi. 15. And particularly, the Father's Spirit is the Son's; hence it is said, Gal. iv. 6. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying*, ABBA, *Father.* This river proceeds not out of the throne of God, or the Father's throne only; but out of the throne of the Lamb also, the Son's throne. The Spirit of life, for quickening dead souls into everlasting life, proceeds not out of the throne of God as an absolute God, but as a God in Christ; and therefore is said to *proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

3. It imports, that the fulness of the Godhead, that is in Christ, is a *communicative* fulness; and hence the river is said to issue *from the throne of God and of the*

Lamb. The everlasting spring of the river is within the throne of God, where the Lamb sits: and the Lamb is anointed with the Spirit above measure; for *the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*, John iii. 34. And this ocean of divine fulness that is in him is not shut up within the throne, but proceeds like a river out of it, that we, *out of his fulness, may receive and grace for grace*, John i. 16. This communication is free, as free as the run of a stream out of a spring. And as the river proceeds freely out of the throne, so we may as freely come and drink of the water of life that runs out towards us. But again it imports,

4. That the giving out of the Spirit, and of all spiritual blessings, is a part of the *royalty* of Christ, and the fruit of his mounting the throne of heaven after he had finished his work upon earth: and hence, *When he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious*, Psal. lxviii. 18. The giving out of the Spirit in the most plentiful manner was deferred till the Lamb that was slain should be in the midst of the throne. It is said, John vii. 39. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*; but, whenever he is glorified, then the river, in a plentiful manner, was to proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come: but if I depart I will send him unto you.* Whenever I am glorified upon the throne, then I will shew the river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne. The giving then of the Spirit of life is a part of the Mediator's royalty. Christ, as a King, hath the giving of the Spirit; this belongs to his administration, as the Lamb now upon the throne: hence says Christ, John xiv. 26. *The Father will send him in my name*, even in my name and authority, as the crowned King of Zion; and, John xvi. 7. *I will send him.* Thus God and the Lamb agree from the imperial throne, to send from thence the river, the Spirit of life, as an evidence of the Mediator's exaltation, and of his glorious kingdom and royalty. Our Lord Jesus Christ sways his sceptre of grace, and erects and maintains his kingdom, by sending

ſending his Spirit. The Lamb was ſacrificed to purchaſe eternal redemption, and is enthroned to give the Spirit; and, O but the Spirit is a royal bleſſing! As Chriſt is a Prieſt upon the throne, ſo theſe that ſhare of his Spirit are a *royal prieſthood;* and, having the Spirit, they are *kings and prieſts to their God.* Let us wait this day about the throne for this glorious fruit and effect of his royal bounty.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed was, To enquire into the *reaſons*, or whence it is that this river of life, for quickening dead ſouls to everlaſting life, *proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

1. It is to ſhew, that as the grace of God towards ſinners is *reigning* grace, *enthroned* grace; ſo it *reigns through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to eternal life*, Rom. v. 21. And that no life, no ſpiritual life, by the word and Spirit of God, is to be expected, but as it runs in this channel. No life by the law or covenant of works is now to be expected. God and Adam are now ſeparate; and the channel of the communication of life, or of living waters, by his covenant with the firſt Adam, is quite cut off: but, behold, God and the Lamb are joined together in an everlaſting covenant, and ſit together on an heavenly throne. The fulneſs of the Godhead is gone in to the ſecond Adam, the fulneſs of the Spirit of life is given to the Lamb *above meaſure*, John iii. 34. And now the Lamb, being *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, is exalted to the Father's throne; a throne enriched with the river of life.—— Grace reigns on that throne, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to the communication of all the bleſſings of everlaſting life. Mercy vents through the blood of Chriſt, through the blood of the Lamb, once hanging upon the croſs, and now reigning upon the throne.

2. This river of life is diſcovered as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, to ſhew the *diſtinct œconomy* of the glorious Trinity in this buſineſs of our redemption, and of the eternal ſalvation of loſt ſinners. God the Father, the firſt perſon in the order of ſubſiſtence, ſits upon the throne of his ſovereign grace;

grace; God the Son, the Lamb that was the purchaſer of life on the croſs, is made the adminiſtrator thereof upon the throne; God the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is the great Applier, bringing home the bleſſings purchaſed to all the redeemed in a perpetual egreſs and flow of divine communications: and hence all the ſtore of divine things and bleſſings, that the Spirit communicates, are ſaid to be the things of God the Father, and Chriſt the Son, diſcovered and diſpenſed by the Holy Ghoſt; *He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine and ſhew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore ſaid I, He ſhall take of mine and ſhew it unto you*, John xvi. 14, 15. And hence alſo believers are ſaid to *receive the Spirit which is of God, that they may know the things that are freely given them of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 21.—Thus we ſee the diſtinct œconomy of each perſon of the glorious Trinity in this matter, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons; and how we are equally indebted to each of them for the benefit of redemption.

3. This river of life is diſcovered as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, to ſhew the *eſſential unity* and *glorious harmony* of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, notwithſtanding of their perſonal diſtinction; according to 1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one.* And this eſſential unity or natural oneneſs is, I think, pointed out in our text, where the throne being called *the throne of God, and of the Lamb*, declares what Chriſt himſelf declared, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* And if the Spirit were not the fountain of living water, equally and eſſentially one with the Father and the Son, how could he proceed like a river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? So that, as in this clear glaſs of the goſpel we ſee the diſtinct œconomy of the glorious Trinity, in the work of redemption, and their perſonal diſtinction, ſo we may ſee their eſſential unity or natural oneneſs: *Theſe three are one God, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory.* And in the ſame light we ſee

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their glorious harmony in our redemption-work. As it is said of the *three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood*, that, as *these three are one*, one in nature; so they agree in one, in one great and glorious work and design towards the salvation of poor sinners. There is a perfect harmony and agreement between God and the Lamb upon the same throne: and how doth the Spirit agree with the Father and the Son proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb like a pure crystaline river? And thus shewing, that everlasting life is from God in Christ, by the Spirit. Again, another reason is,

4. To shew the *excellent firmness* and *stability* of the new-covenant blessings, and on what a sure ground and bottom the eternal life and happiness of the church militant and triumphant is built.——These blessings are equally secured with the throne of God, and of the Lamb, and the perpetual flow of the river or the water of life that proceeds therefrom. The everlasting life of the redeemed is some-way interwoven with the personal properties of the glorious Trinity: for, as the Spirit, personally considered, proceeds from the Father and the Son; so he proceeds communicatively out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, to water all the redeemed, as an everflowing and overflowing river of everlasting life. A glorious Trinity may be seen in every spiritual blessing: hence may a believer say, This pardon, for example, is a divine blessing, it is from the throne of God; it is a purchased blessing, it is from the throne of the Lamb; it is a sealed blessing, by the Spirit, as a river running from the throne of God and of the Lamb, so as the happiness of the redeemed cannot fail, nor the river cease to run out to their everlasting life, no more than God can cease to be God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one everlasting God, in three persons. The stream of grace here, and glory hereafter, proceeds from a fountain that can never be drained; here they will drink, and bathe, and swim for ever, if we may be allowed the expression. The throne of God will still be the throne of the Lamb; he will

will ſtill be a God in Chriſt: and the throne of the Lamb will ſtill be the throne of God; for to him the Father ſays, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And the throne of God and of the Lamb will ſtill be a throne whence the everlaſting Spirit will proceed like a pure cryſtal river; for he will never ceaſe to be a free Spirit, a free fountain of living waters.——O glorious and bleſſed ſecurity.

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed was, To deduce ſome *inferences* for the *application.* **Is it** ſo, *That the living Spirit of God, communicating all the bleſſings of everlaſting life graciouſly here, and gloriouſly hereafter, proceeds like a pure cryſtal river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb?* Then,

1. Hence ſee the *harmony* between the church militant and triumphant; they drink of the ſame river: only here we have but drops, but there they have the ocean, and drink at the fountain-head: the utmoſt here is a *ſtaying us with flaggons*, but there the redeemed ſwim in the river of life. The ſaints in glory, as well as believers on earth, hold their title unto everlaſting life of Chriſt: their everlaſting happineſs is grounded upon the blood of the Lamb, and flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Chriſt will be the glaſs, even in heaven, wherein the glory of God will be ſeen through the pure river of the water of life clear as cryſtal.

2. Hence ſee the *happineſs* of every believer who have got but one ſaving drop of this river poured out upon his heart; for this Spirit of God and of the Lamb will be *in him a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14.; and that becauſe this water proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.—It is a royal bleſſing from the divine throne; and the bleſſings of the throne are the beſt bleſſings. Many are content with the bleſſings of the footſtool, and hunt only after theſe, ſaying, *Who will ſhew us any* earthly *good?* But, bleſſed are theſe that cannot be ſatisfied with any thing leſs than throne-bleſſings; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me: then ſhall*

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I have more gladneſs than the wicked world, *in the time that their corn and wine increaſe*, Pſalm iv. 6. O ſee what a royal gift it is to get the Spirit; Chriſt *aſcended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*, Pſalm lxviii. 18.

3. Hence ſee the *glory* of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, ſhining in the work of redemption thro' Jeſus, and in the way of our ſalvation thro' his blood and righteouſneſs. Here, as in a glaſs, we may ſee the glory of God the Father ſitting on the ſame throne with Chriſt, that is, appearing as a God in Chriſt; the glory of Chriſt the Son, our Redeemer, exalted to the Father's throne, after he had finiſhed his work; and the glory of the Holy Ghoſt in his breathings and bleſſings, graces and comforts, proceeding like a pure cryſtal river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: and alſo the glory of all the divine attributes; their honour is ſecured in this throne of grace, from whence grace and mercy vents, to the credit and honour of juſtice and truth, through the juſtice-ſatisfying blood of the Lamb; therefore it is ſaid, *Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

4. Hence ſee how glorious the *goſpel* is, and how powerful, while it is in the channel wherein the Spirit of life, the river of the water of life runs from the throne of God and of the Lamb; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Gal. iii. 2. It is by the *hearing of faith;* and hence the Spirit and the word are put together in a promiſe to Chriſt, and in him to all his ſeed; *This is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*, Iſaiah lix. 21.—— This river of life, for quickening dead ſouls, runs always in the channel of the word of grace and promiſe; and the goſpel is the *miniſtration of the Spirit* in the hands of his ſent ſervants: and this ought to be highly prized by all that are followers of the Lamb, and would enjoy the witneſs of his Spirit from the throne. There

are, indeed, in our day, many that are but miniſters of the letter; theſe ought to be diſcouraged and diſcountenanced: but there are ſome evidently miniſters of the New Teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; theſe ought to be highly encouraged and countenanced; for, though *the letter kills, the Spirit gives life*, 2 Cor. iii. 6.——It is dangerous to deſert a miniſtry wherein the Spirit of life run; this were to run away from the river that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

This, by the bye, may ſhew us a rule for our conduct in this day of diviſion, when many of the Lord's own children are ready to run to ſome dangerous extremes with reference to their countenancing this or the other miniſter. Why, if they are miniſters of the letter, that have nothing of a goſpel-ſpirit, or of the Spirit of faith or faithfulneſs in preaching or managing; and, if this be evident, why not? Let us teſtify duly againſt them: but, if we have to do with miniſters of the Spirit, let us remember, that ſome of theſe are appointed of God for ſuch a work; and ſome for another work; and ſome of them have a greater meaſure of the Spirit of faith and zeal than others; and ſome of them have a leſſer meaſure given them of God, according to the work he hath for them: but, if they have any meaſure of a goſpel-ſpirit, and of the Spirit of faith and faithfulneſs in their ſtation, though they come not up to the ſame meaſure and degree with others, nor be ſet upon the ſame ground, beware of ſlighting and deſpiſing them; for the great river of the city of God runs out in many ſtreams, ſome greater and ſome leſſer, and to deſpiſe the leaſt ſtream is to deſpiſe the river; *He that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me.*

5. Hence ſee what it is that would make *good* and *happy days* in the church militant; namely, the running out of this river more plentifully: *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderneſs be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a foreſt. Then judgment ſhall dwell in the wilderneſs, and righteouſneſs remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteouſneſs*

teouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever, Iſaiah xxxii. 15,—17. O when may we expect ſuch a day! Indeed, ſuch is the univerſal corruption of church and ſtate, and ſuch hath been our perjury, covenant-breaking and blood-ſhed, unrepented of; and ſuch is the profanity, error, and blaſphemy of the day we live in, that in all appearance, before the happy day of the outpouring of the Spirit, we may expect a terrible day of the outpouring of blood. Our national bloody ſins are crying for bloody vengeance; and many ſee it haſtening on. But, Sirs, what is it that will waſh away Scotland's bloody guilt and bloody gore at once? What but a flood from heaven; even a flow of the pure river, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb! Whatever ſad days may come before it, yet this is the happy day you ought to ſeek, for Zion's ſake, and for the ſake of the riſing generations in Scotland, and of future ages.

6. Hence ſee what would make a *heartſome communion ſolemnity* among us this day, amidſt all the ſad ſigns of the times, namely, the running down of this river. And ſee, at the ſame time, what ground we have to expect this river of life to run out; the ground of hope is, becauſe the Lamb is enthroned. The time was that the Spirit, the Holy Ghoſt, was not given plentifully, *Becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39. But now Jeſus was glorified, the Lamb is ſitting on his Father's throne; therefore we may ſeek and expect that the Spirit may be poured out. Let faith act, for ſupplies of this water, upon Chriſt's exaltation to the Father's right-hand to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins; exalted to give the Spirit of faith and repentance, to give the Spirit of holineſs and comfort; exalted to the well-watered throne to let out the river plentifully. Again,

7. To raiſe our hope and experience, let us from this doctrine ſee, that the throne of God and of the Lamb is no *penurious* throne, that hath little to ſpare: as in our *Father's houſe there is bread enough and to ſpare*, ſo about our Father's throne, the throne of God and

of the Lamb, there is water enough and to ſpare, the pure river of the water of life fully and freely proceeding out of it. The *ſeven Spirits* are ſaid to be *before the throne*, Rev. i. 4; that is, the one eternal Spirit of God, as a river flowing out in all his various ſtreams of gifts, influences, operations, breathings, bleſſings, and comforts: this river is before the throne. Which ſays, by the bye, that it is good to go boldly and frequently to the throne of grace; for this quickening river will meet us by the way; and whenever our feet touch the river, then, like a flood, it will carry us off our own feet, and bear us up towards the throne, as the water did the ark to the top of Ararat.

8. Hence ſee how we may attain *communion* with God at a communion-table, and how we are to go there: you ought to go with as great awe and reverence as if you were going to the throne of God, for his throne is at the head of the table. But then, how ſhall we go to the throne of God, who is an infinitely holy and juſt God, whereas we are guilty, guilty ſinners? Why, we cannot go to the throne of God but through Jeſus Chriſt; and through him we ought to go boldly, becauſe it is not only the throne of God, but of the Lamb, by whoſe blood we have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt. But again, if you think, how ſhall we go thus to the throne of God and of the Lamb, having no life or power to do any thing? Why, indeed, we cannot win to it but, as it were, ſwimming in the river that is before the throne, the river of the Spirit's influences and graces, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. That which brings us to the throne muſt proceed out of the throne; therefore we are to go believingly and dependently, being ſtrong only in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, the grace that is in the throne of grace to be freely communicate from it.

9. Hence we may ſee the *marks* and *characters* of right and *worthy communicants*. They are ſuch as have got a diſcovery of what is here ſhewed unto John: *He ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*—

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I do not mean, that every true believer gets such an extraordinary discovery as John here got the revelation of; but there is something of the mystery thereof in some degree that, I think, every believer gets some view of, particularly in these three things, by which you may examine yourself.

(1.) Have you got a view of the *throne of God*; I mean, of God himself, in his infinite holiness and justice? For God sits upon the throne of his holiness, justice, and other glorious attributes; and to see the throne of God, is to see and know him to be Majesty itself; for a throne points out majesty. Have you ever apprehended the majesty of his holiness and justice, and that the throne of iniquity cannot have fellowship with him; that *he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; that he is a God *that will by no means clear the guilty?* And hath ever the view of this made you tremble and quake, and fear, lest you should never have fellowship with him, because you are nothing but a mass of sin and guilt?

(2.) Have you ever, upon the back of this, got a view of the throne of God as the *throne of the Lamb*, so as the terrible majesty of the throne hath been allayed by the apprehension of divine mercy, venting thro' the blood of the Lamb that was slain; slain *virtually* from the foundation of the world; slain *actually* on the cross at Jerusalem, and now sitting gloriously upon his Father's throne? In this light have you seen infinite holiness honoured and vindicated by the obedience of the Lamb, and infinite justice pleased and satisfied by the death and blood of the Lamb? And hath the view of this turned the throne of God from a terrible to an amiable throne in your eye? The throne of God and of the Lamb is nothing else but a God in Christ reconciling the world to himself; a God declaring himself well-pleased in Jesus Christ.——Hath the view of this turned your fear to hope, and your terror to triumph?

(3.) Have you ever hereupon seen and felt, to your experience, *living waters* proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb? Have you seen the fulness of

of the Spirit to be in Chriſt, as anointed therewith above meaſure? And have you ever found this living water guſhing from the throne, as it were, in a ſweet flood of influences? When you was pouring out your heart before the Lord, he was pouring out this flood upon you, and making you, as it were, ſwim in this river.——Believer, know you not ſomething leſs or more about this? Well, what was the quality of the water which you was then baptized with? Perhaps you came to the throne *empty* and *deſtitute*, and like dry ground; but, before you went away, you was filled as with the fulneſs of a river guſhing out upon you.—Poſſibly you came to the throne very *dead* and *lifeleſs*, ſaying, Oh! is it poſſible that theſe dry bones can live? But your ſoul was quickened, and brought to life and livelineſs, ſo as you found the river to be indeed a river of the water of life; of life to your dead ſoul.—May be you came *polluted* and *unclean*, crying out, *Behold, I am vile!* Will ever ſuch a vile beaſt have acceſs to God, or be waſhed from ſtains? Yet, behold, you found your ſoul ſurrounded with purifying waters, with the pure river of the water of life, inſomuch that, perhaps, at that time, though it was a miſtake, yet you joyfully imagined, that all pollution, corruption, and impurity, was waſhed away with the happy flood that ſweetly overwhelmed you, and drowned all your luſts? Was not the river then in your view as a pure and purifying river?—Again, perhaps, you came to the throne under many *doubts* and *fears*, and *dark clouds;* but, ſay you, before I went away, I got a clear view of the mercy of God in Chriſt, a clear view of his everlaſting love, a clear view of the door of hope open to me; or, at leaſt, that there was hope in Iſrael even for me. You thus found the *pure river of the water of life* to be *clear as cryſtal*, when a guſh of that water was able to clear your eye, when it was dim; to clear your mind, when it was dark and confuſed; to clear your conſcience, when it was black with guilt: the ſtreams of the river, clear as cryſtal, running thro' your heart, made all clear before it.

Have

Have you ever got any view and experience of these things in some measure, however small the degree be? Then you have the mark and character of such as have a right to the communion-table: but, if you never got a view of the *throne of God*, or of the majesty of God, so as to fear his wrath because of your sinfulness; and if you never got a view of the *throne of the Lamb*, or of the mercy of God in Christ, so as to hope in his mercy, as venting through the blood of the Lamb; and if you never felt any drop of this pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of that throne; if you never found one gush of that river of the Spirit's influences, either filling your empty soul, quickening your dead soul, purifying your polluted soul, or clearing your dark mind; then surely you have no right to the communion-table, as being a stranger to communion and fellowship with a God in Christ, by the Spirit.

It may be some poor weak believer will tell me, "Sir, I think, indeed, I am no utter stranger to what you have been saying: there was such a time, and such a time, wherein I thought I got a view of these things; but, alas! all is now gone! the throne of God and of the Lamb is out of view, and the gush of influences from the throne, that I was watered with, is all dried up, and I am nothing but like a piece of parched ground." Well, it may be so; but here is good news; the throne of God and of the Lamb still remains; the pure river of the water of life is still subsisting; and the throne of God and of the Lamb, is still the fountain of living waters, that can never be dried up or drained, but is as full as ever. Therefore, wait about the throne for the pouring out of the Spirit, as *waters upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*

10. Hence see the *duty* of all that hear this gospel, namely, to *come and take of the water of life freely;* to come to Christ, and drink of the river that proceeds out of the throne. This inference is drawn from this doctrine, in the 17th verse of the same chapter; *The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst come,*

come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters.* John vii. 37, 38, 39. *On the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: for he that believeth on me, out of his belly*, out of his heart and bowels, *shall flow rivers of living water. This he speaks of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

He who then stood and cried in this manner before he ascended to the throne, he appointed us to be criers in his name, with this encouragement, *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.* Indeed, if it were not for this encouragement, in vain would we cry to you, but, O regard the cry of the Son of God, saying, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink of this pure river of living water.* I cannot offer you the sacrament safely, till I offer Christ to you, the substance of it; and you cannot take the sacrament honestly, till you accept of the offer, otherwise you will eat and drink unworthily. Let me therefore press this *exhortation* on you, before I close, with a few considerations; and, O look up for power to accompany them. I shall go no further than my text and context.

(1.) Consider the *authority* by which you are called to come to Christ, and drink of these living waters. It is a divine authority; the orders are issued from the throne of God; *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 John iii. 23. Are orders from an earthly throne to be regarded, coming in the name and authority of the prince? O what infinitely more regard is to be had to the throne of God! to the divine authority! If a poor man only were calling you to come to Christ, you might safely fit the call, and say, *By what authority do you these things?* But all the authority of the throne of God and of the Lamb is here interposed; and you cannot fit the call, without trampling on the authority of God.

(2.) Consider the *glory* of that Jesus, who invites you to come to him and share of this living water, and drink of this pure crystal river. O that in this clear stream

ſtream of the Spirit's illumination, you could ſee the glory of Chriſt, who ſays, *He ſhall glorify me!* There is a twofold glory of Chriſt here: he preſents, 1. His imperial throne; 2. His glorious mediatorial fulneſs. —His *glorious throne:* how glorious ſoever the throne of God is, ſo glorious is the throne of the Lamb; for here you ſee the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God: and though he be the Lamb that was ſlain, yet he is God equal with the Father, *and thinks it no robbery to be equal with God:* and the Father thinks it no diſparagement to him to ſet the Lamb in the midſt of his throne. O glorious Jeſus! His blood was the blood of God; his righteouſneſs the righteouſneſs of God; his wiſdom is the wiſdom of God; his power is the power of God; and his throne is the throne of God. Angels and archangels worſhip with reverence before his throne.—His *glorious fulneſs* is here alſo preſented, *all the fulneſs of the Godhead is in him;* all the Father's fulneſs is in him, and all the Spirit's fulneſs is in him. The fulneſs of the Spirit, that ever any mere creature had, is but like the fulneſs of a veſſel; but the fulneſs of the Spirit that is in Chriſt, the Lamb of God, is the fulneſs of a fountain: and hence it is that the Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings, proceed like a *pure river of water of life out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

(3.) Conſider the *qualities* of theſe waters which Jeſus calls you to come to him for. They are ſuch as, whatever be your ſad natural ſtate, or your miſerable preſent caſe, there is ſuitable relief preſented therein.

[1.] Are you *deſtitute* and *empty* of all good, empty of all grace? O let that be no hinderance, but a reaſon to move you to come to Chriſt, and look to the Lamb that is on the Father's throne; for here is a full fountain, a flowing river: he calls you not to come and *give*, but to come and take what you need. O bring all your empty veſſels here; this river comprehends no leſs than God himſelf, and all his perfections; Chriſt himſelf, and all his fulneſs; the Spirit himſelf, and all his graces, bleſſings, and comforts.

[2.] Are you *dead in law*, and *dead in ſin*, dead in ſtate, and heart, and frame? Let that be no hinderance, but a reaſon to move you to come to Jeſus for a drink of this river; becauſe it is the river of the water of life. Chriſt's great complaint is, *Ye will not come to me, that you might have life:* the life of abſolution from the ſentence of the law condemning you to eternal death; together with the life of grace here, and glory hereafter: life to your dead ſouls; preſent life, future life, everlaſting life.

[3.] Are you *polluted* with the naſtineſs of hell about you, and altogether filthy and unclean? This is another reaſon why you muſt come to Jeſus, and ſhare of this pure river, and purifying water. This is the quality of the river to which you are invited to come: the ſtreams of this pure river will waſh and cleanſe your impure heart, and waſh you *from all filthineſs of the fleſh and of the Spirit.*

[4.] In a word, Are you *dark* and *ignorant*, and *unclean* in your mind about the knowledge of God, and the things of God; and in your conſcience about peace with God? Why, here is no bar, but a motive to come to Chriſt and take of the *water of life freely;* for another quality of the waters is, that they are *clear as cryſtal.* And how ſhall you get either the mind cleared from darkneſs, or the conſcience cleared of guilt, but by looking, as it were, through this cryſtal flood that proceeds out of the throne; I mean, the clear glaſs of the Spirit's illumination, to ſee by this means that the throne of God is the throne of the Lamb; that is, that God is a God in Chriſt, whom, to ſee and know, is life eternal; there is clearing to the mind. And to ſee alſo, that the Lamb upon the throne of God now, is the Lamb that was ſlain to be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice and expiate guilt; there is clearing for the conſcience, when diſcerned, that, being juſtified by faith, you may have peace with God. Conſider then the quality of theſe waters which the Lord Jeſus calls you to come and take, to come and drink; they can anſwer every caſe.

(4.) Con-

(4.) Consider what is the *quality* of those that are invited to come to these waters, and upon what *terms* you may have a drink here, and live for ever: why, the exhortation here says, *Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, ver. 17. Here is the quality, *Let him that is* athirst *come*. Who is the *thirsty* person? I answer, It is the man that stands in need of a drink. If you need a drink of this water; if you need Christ; then you are invited to come and drink. Why, say you, we all need Christ; then say I, you are all welcome for to come to Christ; and I dare seek no other qualification of you.

"But pray, Sir, say you, tell us plainly what you mean by this *thirst*: for I thought I would have been excluded by this qualification, because perhaps I have not a right thirst?" Why, man, I dare not, upon my peril, add any thing to this word, only, *Let him that is athirst come;* because of the word that follows that text, ver. 18. *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book*. Now, if I should add any thing to this word, *Let him that is athirst come*, by saying, The call is only to you that thirst rightly, to you that thirst greatly, to you that thirst vehemently, to you that thirst spiritually, to you that thirst after nothing else but this water of life, then I would run the terrible hazard of adding to God's word, and also the hazard of scarring you from coming to Christ, saying, I fear I want this and that qualification. God hath set down the word *universally*, without qualifying what kind of a thirst it is, that so the call may be widely extended to all that thirst under heaven: therefore says Christ again, John vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. If any man*, that is, any man or woman under heaven; for God created man male and female: if any man, any person of Adam's race, needs a drink of these waters of life, let him come. But some are thirsting after the world, after their vile lusts; are not these excluded? No, no: the Spirit of God comments upon this thirst, and invites even these by name, as persons that

ſtand much in need of Chriſt, Iſaiah lv. 1, 2. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the waters*, &c. *Wherefore do ye ſpend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* That is, All ye that are ſeeking and thirſting after ſatisfaction in the muddy waters of the world, and in the filthy water of your luſts, come to me, and you will get better water for nothing, even the pure river of the water of life; and ſo it is all thirſters under heaven that hear this goſpel, even all that need a drink of this water. And why doth Chriſt, think you, offer himſelf to you all, and every one of you? Not only becauſe you all need him, but becauſe his Father gives him to you, as he ſays, John vi. 32. *My Father gives you the true bread from heaven:* Even ſo, which is the ſame thing, his Father gives you the true water of life, everlaſting life is given in the word; *This is his record, that God hath given you eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* You have a right to it, and a right to take what God gives. Say not, If he be given to *me*, there needs no more, I am happy: Why, man, you might die of thirſt, tho' one gave you a cup of water, if you would not take and drink what is given you; ſo you may die and periſh for ever, though Chriſt, and the water of everlaſting life be given you, in this word, if you do not take and welcome the gift of God to your heart; and you periſh fearfully if you reject and neglect what was thus given you. If you aſk, What is the *leaſt* qualification required, in order to come to the throne of God and of the Lamb for this river of the water of life? Indeed, I cannot tell you what is the leaſt: for, let us ſeek from you never ſo little a qualification, Chriſt will ſeek leſs; let us go never ſo low, Chriſt will go lower. He that came down as low as hell to make the purchaſe, will come down as low as hell to make the application. Therefore, ſinner, though you be in a deep hell of ſin and miſery, out of the belly of hell look to him and be ſaved. If you need Chriſt, and think he can do you any good, it is qualification enough. For God's ſake, ſhut not the door of hope againſt yourſelf, when God is opening it to you. Though your thirſt be no other

than

than like that of the dry ground, that needs a ſhower, O come to him that ſays, Iſaiah xliv. 3. *I will pour water on the thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.*— God is at pains to find out words to fit your condition, and to ſhut all back-doors, that your unbelief may have no excuſe, and that none here may have it to ſay, The offer was not made to me.

If theſe conſiderations and arguments were duly pondered, they might have weight: but, alas; no argument will do but an argument of power; no motive will do, if God be not the mover. You remain dead carcaſſes, dead ſouls, notwithſtanding all the words that can be ſaid concerning theſe living waters that iſſue from the throne of God and of the Lamb. But, O! ſince it is life eternal to know God and the Lamb. I muſt tell you, that this moment, that ſpiritual life, which is and will be eternal, will begin to ſtir in your heart and ſoul, be it never ſo dead; if this moment you begin to know, that this God that ſits upon the throne with the Lamb, is the living God; and that this Lamb that ſits upon the throne of God, is the Lamb that was dead and is alive, and lives for evermore; and that this river, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, is the river of the water of life, the living Spirit of God and of the Lamb: *They that know his name, will put their truſt in him.* If you know the name of this living God, though you were never ſo dead, the life of faith, and hope, and truſt in him, will begin. And there are two parts of his name, that, I think, I am commiſſioned to declare among a company of dead ſouls here, which you ſhall no ſooner ſavingly know, but you ſhall inſtantly live.

One part of his name is, Exod. iii. 4. I AM THAT I AM. And, I think, he, whoſe name is, *I am*, hath ſent me to tell you, that this is his name; the God of beings, who hath life and being in himſelf: He is being itſelf, and none can ſay, *I am* but himſelf. All the creatures in heaven and earth are nothing before him: He brought them out of nothing, and they are reducible to nothing if he pleaſes.

Another

Another part of his name is, Rom. iv. 17. *The God that quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they were.* Now, O dead and lifeleſs ſoul! if you have but ears to hear this goſpel, do you know that this is the name of God? I aſk not, if you *think* and *fancy* ſo; but do you *know* and *believe* that he is *the God that quickens the dead*, and quickens whom he will, and is able to quicken you? Do you know and believe that he is the God that *calls things that are not, as though they were:* who with his bare word can give a being to that which is nothing, and create light and life, where there was nothing but darkneſs and death, ſaying, *Let there be light: let there be life?* Now, if you know your own name to be darkneſs and death; and if you know this name of the Lord to be *The Lord of light and life; the God that quickens the dead*, then I know there will be ſome ſtirring among the dead and dry bones and hearts here: *Ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live*, Ezekiel xxxviii. 13, 14.

There is no room then for any to object, Why is the miniſter calling us all to come to Chriſt, and take of this water of life? How can one come to Chriſt for life, that hath no life enabling him to come? Indeed, I could not well anſwer that, if it were only the word of the miniſter that was calling: but he calls you who hath the words of eternal life, and whoſe word creates life, whoſe word recovers life, whoſe word maintains life, whoſe word perfects life, quickening whom he will to everlaſting life, and whoſe words are Spirit and life; inſomuch, that one drop of this river of the water of life, mixed with this word, will make it a life-giving word: Therefore, in his great name, who ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live;* in his name and authority, we ſay, O dead and dry bones, riſe and live; for, *the God that quickens the dead calls you.* O lame and diſeaſed ſouls that cannot ſtir, riſe and come, for the Lord of life calls you. O dead ſinner, dead Lazarus, that hath been ſo long

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rotting in the grave of sin and sloth, come forth, come forth; for he that is the resurrection and the life calls you. However long or short time you have been dead in sins and trespasses, and stinking in that filthy sepulchre, yet if there be any stream of the water of life running from the throne this moment, any motion of the living Spirit about your heart, then a quickening voice from the throne of God and of the Lamb is calling you. Words without power will not do with you; the words of men and angels cannot give you the least degree of life, nor quicken that dead heart of yours; but, *where the word of a king is, there is power.* Rise then, dying, drooping soul, the Master calls you. The King of glory that sits upon the Father's throne is speaking to you, and saying, "*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away:* however foul and filthy, black and ugly in thyself. Lo! *The winter is past, and the rain is over and gone;* the storm of divine wrath, that should have fallen on thee for ever, is over thy head, and hath fallen on my head, when I swate in the garden, and hang upon the cross; and now I have mounted my Father's throne, to draw thee up to me, and to send down my Spirit as the river of life, to run into thy heart, and quicken thee to hear my voice, and answer my call. Come then, though you see yourself black like hell, and like a devil; *Rise my love, my fair one, and come away. Come with me from Lebanon; from the lions dens, and mountains of leopards.* Come away from this vain world, this vile world, this venomous and viperous world; come and share of my grace in time, and my glory for ever after time." Blessed are they that hear his voice, and open to him. If the river of life that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb be running through any heart here, the work is done, life is begun, and open doors are made for the King of glory: if it be otherwise, I have no more to say, but, glory to God and the Lamb, that *as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe*, and live for ever.

SERMON

SERMON XCVIII.

The COMER's CONFLICT; or, the BEGINNER's BATTLE WITH THE DEVIL, when eſſaying to come to CHRIST by Faith *.

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw him down and tare him.—

HERE is the hiſtory of Chriſt's healing a lunatic child, whoſe father came to the diſciples, and they could not cure him; and now he cometh to Chriſt. As we ought to come to Chriſt ourſelves for healing, ſo we ought to bring our children to him; and when ſervants and other means can do us no good, we ought to go to the maſter, and look over the head of all miniſters and ſervants. After Chriſt had reproached the diſciples for their unbelief, he gives the poor man an encouraging word concerning his ſon; *Bring thy ſon hither*, ver. 41. Bring him to me. We ought to bring our ſons and our daughters to Chriſt; to bring our diſeaſes and all our various caſes to Chriſt. But after this encouragement, follows a trial in the text: *As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.*

In which words we have three things obſervable, namely,

* This Subject was handled in two Diſcourſes. The firſt was delivered at an evening exerciſe, on Saturday, July 19. 1735. before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Kinglaſſie on the 20th. The ſecond was preached on the Monday, after the adminiſtration of that ordinance.——It hath undergone five impreſſions.

In

1. An excellent *duty;* that is, *coming* to Chriſt.

2. An eminent *trial* and heavy *diſpenſation* that befel the comer; *The devil threw him down and tare him.*

3. The *time* and *juncture* when this heavy trial and great affliction befel him, namely, *As he was yet a coming.*

Hence we may obſerve the three following particulars.

(1.) The *beſt courſe* that any can take for relief from whatever afflicts them, is to come to Jeſus the Saviour.

(2.) They who come to Chriſt for help will be an *eye-ſore* to hell and the devil; he will be ſure to fly upon them.

(3.) They who come to Chriſt for help and healing, though they may be ſure he will help and heal them, yet they may find their caſe *worſe* before the relief come; they may be thrown down, and torn, as it were, to pieces by the way. Or thus, Chriſt may undertake to deliver people, and yet their diſtreſs may grow upon their hand before their deliverance come. Here is Chriſt's undertaking, *Bring him hither to me.* Here is the perſon coming with hope of deliverance, *he is on his way coming to Jeſus;* and yet, behold, here is a dreadful daſh, a mighty trial to faith and hope, both in the father and ſon: yea, after he was come to the phyſician, and the healing word ſpoken, as you ſee, Mark ix. 25, 26. where this ſame hiſtory is recorded, with other circumſtances, *The ſpirit cried, and rent him ſore before he came out of him, and ſo he was as one dead, inſomuch, that many ſaid, He is dead.*

Well then, the doctrinal obſervation, we would incline briefly to proſecute from theſe words, may be framed as follows.

DOCT. *That people, who come to Chriſt, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their diſtreſs growing on their hand, before the deliverance come, which yet will certainly come.*

It is in this case, as it was with Israel in Egypt, *God saw their affliction*, and undertook to come and save them; and yet, behold, before their deliverance comes, their bondage becomes heavier than before. The darkest time of the night may be before day break. Thus it was with Israel, in returning from Babylon, to rebuild the temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.— The king gives commandment to go and build; God stirs up the civil authority to give encouragement to them: but quickly the haters of Zion, misrepresenting the work, procure an order to cause them desist from it. This doctrine then is verified both with relation to God's public work towards a church, and his particular work on the souls of his people, as you see it was with the ruler of the synagogue, Mark v. 23. that applied to Christ in behalf of his daughter at the point of death, that he might come and heal her. Christ went with him; but see what sad news he gets from his house, *Trouble not the Master, for your daughter is dead*, ver. 35. And now they looked upon the matter as hopeless, tho' yet Christ was on his way to save her.

The method we would lay down, for the farther prosecuting this subject, through supernatural aid, shall be the following.

I. We will speak a little of *coming* to Christ.
II. Enquire in what *respects* matters may grow *worse* with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ.
III. Enquire into the *reasons* whence it is that people who come to Christ for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their *distress grow* before their *deliverance come.*
IV. Make some *application* of the whole.

I. We are to speak a little of *coming* to Christ—— There are only two things I would observe here.

1. Coming to Christ imports a view that *vain is the help of man;* vain is the help of the creatures; vain is the help of ministers, means, and ordinances of themselves. Thus it was here with the father of the child; *I be-*

I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out, but they could not, ver. 40. So they who come to Chriſt find *all other refuges fail them*, Pſalm cxlii. 4.; other phyſicians were of no value. None come to Chriſt till they can do no better; yet he is content with ſuch comers that ſee there is no other ſhift for them.

2. This coming to Chriſt imports a putting the *work in his hand; Maſter, I beſeech thee look upon my ſon:* he prays, and he brings him to Chriſt at the Lord's call. They that truly come to Chriſt for help, they put the work in his hand, and give him employment in his ſaving offices, looking on him as able, and willing, and ready to ſave: the diſeaſe is half cured when it is laid at Chriſt's feet. Happy they that come thus to him, and intruſt him with their ſouls, and truſt with their caſes: *Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he will bring it to paſs*, Pſalm xxxvii. 5.

II. The ſecond head propoſed was, to enquire in what *reſpects* may matters *grow worſe* with people, even when they are thus coming to Chriſt. Here two things are recorded; 1. Satan's aſſault, *The devil threw him down.* 2. How he uſed him, *And he tare him.*

1. They who come to Chriſt, before they get the deliverance which is inſured to them, they may meet with *down-caſting* providences; *The devil threw him down.* They may be caſt down with diſcouragement and deſpondency for a while; caſt down with fears and doubts; caſt down with jealous apprehenſions and unbelieving thoughts. Believing ſouls, after their coming to Chriſt, much more as they are coming at firſt, may be greatly caſt down; *O my God, my ſoul is caſt down within me*, Pſalm xlii. 6. They may be caſt down with a multitude of perplexing thoughts, deſpairing thoughts, and manifold objections and ſcruples, their mind raiſes, or rather unbelief frames within them.

2. They may not only be thrown down, but *torn* by the way; *The devil threw him down and* TARE *him.* Whenever a man begins to come to Chriſt, and the devil begins to fear he ſhall loſe his poſſeſſion, then he

rages againſt that man, and would tear him to pieces. Therefore think not ſtrange that beginners in religion and ſuch as are coming, or but lately come to Chriſt, or even theſe who have come formerly, and are coming again to him, may be mightily aſſaulted and attacked by all the powers of hell. So long as people remain at a diſtance from Chriſt, the devil does not meddle with them; *He keeps the houſe, and the goods are at peace;* but in coming to Chriſt they may lay their account to be torn by torments, torn by terrors, and blaſphemous ſuggeſtions; they may lay their account with fiery darts. When we expect the Lord is about to remove one burden, he may lay on another, that he may have the more mercy on us.

III. The next thing propoſed was, to enquire into the *reaſons* whence it is that people, who coming to Chriſt for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their *diſtreſs grow* before their *deliverance come*. Whatever malicious hand the devil hath in this matter, God hath a holy hand in permiting it.

1. God's deſign in it is to ſhew his *wiſdom* and *power*.

(1.) It is to manifeſt his *wiſdom*: how he can advance his work, by the ſtops in the way of it; and enrich his people, by impoveriſhing them; enlarge them, by impriſoning them: and *give them meat out of the eater, and ſweet out of the ſtrong*.

(2.) It is to evince his *power*; how he can ſupport them under, and deliver them from their diſtreſſes, which would not appear ſo much, if their diſtreſs came not to a height. He ſuffers them to be dejected and torn, that his wiſdom and power may appear the more evidently in lifting them up and healing them.

2. It is to *check the unbelief* that attends our faith in coming to Chriſt. Sometimes when we commit our caſe to him by faith, we do not exerciſe this faith to a *patient waiting for the Lord*. Chriſt's *firſt* word to his people is, *Come to me*, Matth. xi. 28.; and his *laſt* word is, *Abide in me*, John xv. 4. It is well done to come, but, alas! we do not abide; and therefore, to

check

check our unbelief in coming, as it were, but one ſtep, and going back the next ſtep, he ſhews the need of going forward, by letting looſe the enemy, and ſuffering matters to grow worſe with us.

3. It is to raiſe the *worth* and *eſteem* of his mercies in the hearts of theſe who come to him. We uſually do not know the worth of mercy, till we be deprived of it; nor the worth of deliverance, till the diſtreſs be extremely great: help is then highly eſteemed, when we can ſay, *I was brought low, and he helped me.*

4. It is to try our *faith*, whether or not it be ſuch as will not only come to Chriſt, but alſo abide with him till he work the deliverance; and if we can keep our eye upon the deliverer, when the deliverance is delayed; our eye upon the promiſe, when croſs providences appear; and can hope againſt hope. He deſigns the trial of faith for the preſent, and a more glorious iſſue thereafter.

IV. The laſt general head propoſed was, To make ſome *application*. Is it ſo, *That people who come to Chriſt, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their diſtreſs growing on their hand, before the deliverance come, which yet will certainly come?* Hence we may ſee,

1. What a *cruel enemy* the devil is to immortal ſouls, and their eternal ſalvation: for, whenever a ſoul begins to mind religion in earneſt, and to come to Chriſt for help and deliverance, then that ſoul becomes the object of the devil's ſpite and malice. As long as people remain graceleſs, and Chriſtleſs, and formal, the devil will let them enjoy themſelves, and hugs them aſleep in their ſecurity; but as ſoon as they begin to come to Chriſt, then he will attempt to caſt them down and tear them, and ſtirs up all his wicked inſtruments, either to diſcourage and ridicule them, or to tear their name and reputation to pieces, and to perſecute them with tongue or hand, or to raiſe a hue and cry againſt them, as if they were turned diſtracted, and out of their wits. As they are *coming, the devil throws them down and tears them.*

2. Hence

2. Hence see the *reason* of all the *melancholly moods*, *heavy damps*, and *great discouragements* of many beginners, that are setting on in the Lord's way; though *wisdom's ways be ways of pleasantness*, yet Satan, who is a *liar from the beginning*, would make the world believe, that it is a bitter and unpleasant way; and that the beginning of religion is but the *beginning of sorrows*.

3. Hence see the difference between the *conviction of the Spirit* and the *temptation of Satan;* and the difference between the distress of soul, that arises from a law-work before conversion, and that which arises from the assault of the enemy of our salvation; whenever conviction begins, and the soul comes to be troubled for sin, and under fear of hell and wrath, Satan indeed fishes in the muddy water, and mixes his temptations with the Spirit's convictions; and if he can bring all convictions to nothing, either by force or fraud, he will do it, that the convinced soul may never come to Christ for a cure: *Satan will stand at his right hand to resist him.* But the difference between them is,

(1.) The *conviction of the Spirit* are BEFORE a man come to Christ, and tend as a severe *school-master to lead him to Christ*, Gal. iii. 24. But the *temptations of the devil* are especially when a man is COMING to Christ, in order to keep him from coming.——If the Spirit of God, by a law-work, seem as it were, to cast down the man, and tear him to pieces, the design is to *oblige* him to go to Christ for help and healing; and to provoke him to come to the Saviour, and fly to the city of refuge. But the design of the devil's temptations, when he throws down and tears the soul, is, when he is coming, or as he is coming to Christ, in order to *detain* him from coming, or discourage him in coming.

(2.) The *convictions of the Spirit* are *humbling*, tending to make the soul despair of help in himself, or in God out of Christ. The *temptations of the enemy* are *terrifying*, tending to make the soul despair of help in Christ, or in God through him: the former shuts the door

door of hope by the law; but the devil would shut the door of hope by the gospel.

4. Hence see there is no ground to *blame religion* and *religious duties*, notwithstanding discouragements and downcasting trials in the way of duty: though matters grow worse with you in the way of duty, and in the way of coming to Christ, blame not yourself for coming to Christ, because the devil attacks you by the way. You have enough to charge yourself with, though you charge not yourself foolishly. It would be far worse with you if the devil and your own wicked heart prevail to take you off from the use of promising means. When, like Peter, you cast yourself upon the water to come to Christ, be not terrified, though the devil raise a storm; the Lord Jesus *sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters*, Psalm xciii. 4.——Never think the worse of Christ, though matters seem to grow worse with you, when you come to him for rest, and yet find trouble; for it is the devil and the ill heart that breeds all the trouble: keep honourable thoughts of the Lord Jesus; believe he can do for you, and wait till you find that he will do. Bring wind from all cross providences to hasten you nearer to your resting place; for all that comes to him shall find rest in spite of the devil: some begun rest here in time, however disturbed by the devil from time to time, and by unbelief, until rest be perfected in heaven.

5. Hence see an *evidence* of a *true believer* and *comer* to Christ: if the devil be no enemy to your faith, you may know it is a false faith. Many have a faith that the devil is well enough pleased with; and therefore he never troubles them nor it: but if you have saving faith, it will be the eye-sore of hell; or if you be truly coming to Christ, you may expect the devil to be upon your top. No sooner doth true faith begin, but the fight of faith begins. Some may bless themselves they were never assaulted by the devil, and yet they are but sleeping, as it were, in the devil's cradle; he is rocking them. Try your faith; if it be from heaven it will meet with opposition from hell: *We wrestle not*

against

againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places, Epheſ. vi. 12. Therefore we are called, as part of the Chriſtian armour, to take *the ſhield of Faith, whereby we ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, verſe 16. The devil may let you peaceably go about duty; read, and pray, and communicate, becauſe you may do theſe things carnally and formally, and go to hell when all is done: but if once you begin to come to Chriſt, or to go about any duty believingly, then you are on the way to heaven, and if the devil can, he will draw you back, and throw you down with diſcouragements, and tear you with temptations, either as you are coming, or after you are come. But it is always the *beſt* faith that is moſt oppoſed by the devil.

This doctrine may be applied by way of *addreſs*, 1. To theſe who never yet came to Chriſt for help and ſalvation. 2. To theſe who are coming in obedience to his call.

1. To you who *never yet came to Chriſt* for help and ſalvation. Oh! ſtay not away from him for fear of the devil, leſt he throw you down and tear you. Better be thrown down by the way in coming to Chriſt, than thrown down to hell, with the devil at laſt, by the hand of God, who will throw you and the devil down to hell if you do not come to Chriſt. Better that the devil tear you to pieces, when there is a Deliverer, even Jeſus, at hand to deliver you from him, than that God himſelf tear you to pieces when there ſhall be none to deliver: *Conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver*, Pſalm l. 22. Come, otherwiſe you remain ſlaves to the devil and your luſts. O be ſenſible of your ſlavery and malady! Know none can ſave you but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he is a mighty Saviour, and a merciful one: *No name is given under heaven, whereby a ſinner can be ſaved, but the name of Jeſus*. Put the work in his hand; put your ſoul in his hand. *Bring him here to me*, ſays Chriſt

Chriſt, to the man here. O come and bring your children with you; hear him ſaying, Bring your ſon to me, bring your daughter to me, bring your ſoul and your caſe to me; O bring your diſeaſe to me, bring your hard heart to me, and I will ſoften it; bring your filthy heart to me, and I will cleanſe it; bring your heart poſſeſſed of the devil to me, and I will caſt out the devil; bring your ſeven devils to me, and I will caſt them out.

2. We addreſs ourſelves to you who are *coming* in anſwer to his call. O be not diſmayed, though the devil throw you down and tear you as you are coming. Here is a Saviour ready to lift up, whom the devil throws down; ready to heal, whom the devil tears; ready to help all that are hurt by the old ſerpent. It is his trade to *deſtroy the works of the devil.* You may be always ſure that it is an evil ſpirit that is dealing with you, that would mar and hinder you in your coming to Chriſt; for the voice of the Spirit of God is, *Come; The Spirit and the bride ſay, Come.* The Spirit of God, as a Spirit of bondage, may caſt down the ſoul before it come to Chriſt, and in order to its coming; but it is not the Spirit of God that caſts down the coming believer; no, *We have not received the ſpirit of bondage again unto fear*, Rom. viii 15. After coming to Chriſt, and believing in him, it is only the devil that caſts down and tears you. Fear not the lion of hell: here is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to defend you: it is unbelief and departing from Chriſt, that may bring you to the greateſt danger; therefore, *Fear not, only believe* *.

* This ends what was delivered on the ſaturday evening. In the firſt edition of this diſcourſe, we are acquainted, that the Author enlarged the application, in ſome other inferences, upon the Sabbath-day; but the notes of that diſcourſe were not written. What follows, we are told, was delivered upon the Monday, after the ſacrament.

SERMON XCIX.

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw him down and tare him.—

[The second Sermon on this Text.]

THIS doctrine may be applied, at the time, in an *exhortation* or *advice* particularly to these that are *tempted* and *torn* of the devil, when they essay to come to the Lord Jesus. In order to your being fortified, through grace, against his assaults and fiery darts, there are only six sorts of temptations, I would, at present, endeavour to fortify you against, 1. With reference to *heart-blasphemy*. 2. With reference to *heart-wandering*. 3. With reference to the *commission* of sin. 4. With reference to the *omission* of duty. 5. With reference to *unworthy apprehensions* of God. 6. With reference to *self-murder*. There are temptations with reference to all these that you need to be fortified against; while you are coming to Christ, Satan may attempt to throw you down, and tear you in all these, and many other respects; but I shall touch a little at each of these.

1*st*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *blasphemy*, whereby he would throw down and tear in pieces, as it were, the souls of these that come to the Lord Jesus Christ. They may be tempted to dreadful blasphemous thoughts, which are not to be named, they are so detestable and abominable; they are fearful injections upon the mind, and very terrifying to a weak believer that is coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to your being fortified against these, I would offer you the following advices.

1. Be

1. Be not *terrified* with them, since they harm you more by their horror, than by their guilt. It is true, the guilt of them is so great, that it is unpardonable to whom it belongs. These are Satan's sins, and not thine; and he shall answer for them, and not thou. Though he lay these blasphemous thoughts at your door, he is the father of them. Such thoughts are like lightenings cast into a room, they have a great deal of horror; but as the lightening springs not from any cause in the room, so these thoughts proceed not from any thing in thee; not properly from thy corruptions, for unregenerate men themselves abhor them: and though the seed of all sin be in our nature, yet scare, if ever, doth this sin spring up even in reprobates; nay, the devil himself doth not think of God that which these thoughts signify. Since thou dost not actually, nor did originally in Adam, give consent to these thoughts, they are not thy sins. Suppose some villain should meet a chaste virgin in a field and ravish her, if she struggles and cries, she is innocent by the law of God; this is his her affliction, not her sin. She may mourn for her suffering, not her guilt; especially she doing nothing to provoke him. It may be the villain finds her at prayer, as the devil doth find thee, when he injects these thoughts. Therefore, be of good comfort, thou art more afraid than hurt: for a careless wandering thought in prayer, hath more guilt in it than these have. If one attempt suddenly to strike our eye, though we know he doth not intend to strike it, yet it cannot but wink; so we can scare choose but be terrified with these thoughts; but we must resist and conquer such fears. I say not, we should not abhor such thoughts, for then we should be worse than heathens; but we should not be terrified out of our faith, or duties, or comforts thereby.

2. Do not *give over your duties* for these blasphemous thoughts and injections; for, tho' these thoughts are not thy sin, yet they may be the cause of thy sinning, if they cause thee to abstain from prayer, reading the word, attending upon the ordinances, and the like duties. You may, perhaps, think it better not to pray

than to have these thoughts: but thy prayers may do thee more good than these can do thee harm: and how wilt thou conquer if thou cast away thy weapons? Neither hasten from duty; for thus you do the devil too much homage; his temptations should make you pray the more, not seldomer, or shorter.

3. *Think not over those thoughts again*, even when thou goest to God to complain of Satan and his dreadful assaults; for, if thou yield not unto the tempter, these blasphemies are not the matter of confession, but rather of complaint; as a woman that is ravished doth not confess, but lament her affliction. Neither speak them over, when you go to a Minister or Christian friend for advice or comfort; but only mention in general, that horrid thoughts and blasphemies trouble you: they will understand what you mean; but, perhaps they had as good Satan should inject such thoughts, as to hear you name them.

4. *Pray much against these blasphemies*, and thus study to be gainers by them, and to be avenged upon Satan, which you may, if you do as they did, Acts xix. when they heard that some would speak against their goddess Diana, they cried out for the space of two hours, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, ver. 28, 34.; so that whosoever should go about to speak against Diana could not be heard. Do thou likewise; when Satan throws in blasphemous thoughts, break thou forth into blessing and praising of God; and if thou canst not do so, try to read or sing some psalm full of praises, as Psal. ciii. cv. cxvi. cxlv. *&c.*: and if thou art private enough, read or sing them with a loud voice, and when Satan shall see that thou art the gainer by his temptations, he will be weary of tempting thee. These blasphemies are Satan's railings and revilings against the God of heaven; therefore you are to do with them as Hezekiah did with Rabshakeh's railing letter, Isa. xxxvi. 21. he went and *spread the blasphemy before the Lord.* He did not so much as read over the letter, but spread it before the Lord: so, without naming over that blasphemy, you should pray against it,

it, that God would ſuppreſs this ſmoak that aſcends out of the bottomleſs pit.

You may lawfully diſpute and argue with Satan againſt ſome of his blaſphemies; as when he tempts you to queſtion the being of a God, and the truth of divine revelation, as the archangel diſputed with the devil about the body of Moſes; ſo when you are tempted, for example, to doubt if the ſcripture be the word of God, you may conſider the plain arguments that prove it, and aſk Satan, Why doſt thou fly before it? If the ark were not the ark of God, why doth Dagon fall before it? If it were not the word of God, why doth Satan tempt me not to believe it? But do not depend upon thy arguing; Satan is too ſtrong for reaſoning; betake thyſelf to the Lord Jeſus by prayer. Though Satan may ſtand out againſt thy arguments, he will not be able to ſtand againſt the prayer of faith. The archangel ſaid, *The Lord rebuke thee.* Though he will not fly at thy rebuke, yet he will and muſt at the rebuke of God. And by the way, ſee the excellency of Chriſt above the archangel: Chriſt rebukes Satan by his own power and authority; for he ſaid not, *The Lord rebuke thee;* but, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

2*dly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *heart-wanderings* in duty. Satan knows, that if he can get theſe flies to come and reſt in this precious ointment, they will putrify it.——He knows, if the thoughts wander, God regards not what the tongue ſays; and if he can ſpoil your prayers, he fears not any ordinance what good it can do thee. If your thoughts be earthly, he cares not how heavenly your words are.—Herein Satan gets aſſiſtance from the *evil heart; Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts*, Mat. xv. 19. They ariſe out of the heart as ſparks out of a furnace; they ſtay not in the heart, but are active, and aſcend up to the head: and they come out of the heart, not as ſparks out of a flint, by concuſſion and violence, forced out; but they *proceed out* of it, ſays Chriſt; they come out of themſelves, and they proceed always in a continued act.—Satan's temptations

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to heart-wandering in duty, are alſo furthered by a *multitude of buſineſs*, and that two ways.

(1.) If we *come from* a multitude of buſineſs; for our hearts are like the troubled ſea, it muſt have ſome conſiderable time before it be compoſed, though the winds that raiſed the ſtorms ceaſe; ſo when we come from buſineſs, there muſt be ſome time after our buſineſs is ended before our hearts can be ſedate and quiet, and fit for prayer; nay, in this our hearts are worſe than the ſea, becauſe,

(2.) *Future* buſineſs will diſtract us before it come. The ſea is not tumultuous before the wind blow, but the buſineſs we have to do will trouble us before it comes to be done. It is a hard thing to keep buſineſs out of our thoughts when we pray, and make it ſtay till our prayer be ended,

Now, to fortify againſt theſe, I offer the following four advices ſhortly.

1. O ſtudy to *mortify the love of the world:* where our love is, there will our thoughts be. To ſet your love on the world, and your thoughts on God, you will find altogether impoſſible; *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* O ſeek to mortify this.

2. Lay up your *treaſure in heaven*; *For, where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo*, Matth. vi. 21. The heart of the Jews *went after their covetouſneſs*, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.; when they were hearing the word they could not keep their hearts where their bodies were, but they would be where their love was, and where their treaſure was.

3. Let not the *world be your familiar friend*, for familiar friends come in without knocking or aſking leave; therefore be thou a *ſtranger in this preſent world*, Heb. xi. 13. They were not ſtrangers in this or that part of the earth, but in the whole earth: be a ſtranger to the world, and the world will not viſit you in prayer.

4. Make *prayer your delight*, not your taſk. Children are ſubject to look off their books, becauſe they delight not in them; but when they are playing, they are

are eager and earneſt. The bird flutters in the cage; but ſits quietly on the tree, and ſings there: *I will go to God*, ſays David, *to God my exceeding joy*, Pſal. xliii. 4. When our thoughts find ſatisfaction, they ſet up their habitation and wander not.

3*dly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *omiſſion of duty:* as for example, he repreſents to them the difficulty that there is therein. O I cannot pray nor hear aright, I cannot meditate nor mortify aright; therefore I may let it alone. Now, in order to fortify againſt theſe temptations, conſider,

1. That this is *neceſſary;* you muſt be *exerciſed unto godlineſs;* exerciſed in *keeping a conſcience void of offence towards God and man;* and be *ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Corinth. xv. 58. As for the wicked, who are otherwiſe diſpoſed, having no heart nor will to the Lord's ſervice at all, what can they expect at his hand, but this, *Take theſe mine enemies, that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring them hither, and ſlay them before me:* Yea, *he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel.* It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary.

2. Conſider, that it is *poſſible* to ſerve the Lord acceptably by his grace. Though duty be difficult to nature; yet, if you get the Spirit of God to help you, you will do well enough; and God hath promiſed his help, Iſaiah xl. 29,—31. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength*, &c. *They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength.*— Hence all the ſaints of old, and of late too, have tried the Lord's way, and found that the way of the Lord was *ſtrength to them;* yea, *that wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs:* their *delight* was *in the law of the Lord; in keeping of his commands there is a great reward.* One ſmile of God's countenance is worth all your pains, tho' you were at a hundred times more. There is always ſome thing ſavoury and ſweet in religion that accompany the ſedulous exerciſe thereof. Tho' the ſoul hath nothing to claim on the account of its own works

or

or duties; yet the Lord is graciously pleased to own and countenance his own way, when the soul is found in it, beside the glorious and gracious reward that abides it in heaven.

Therefore, let faith batter down this temptation of Satan, saying, What though Satan present difficulties in the way, Christ underwent greater difficulties: He hath borne the burden and the heat of the day. I am not called to go and *satisfy justice;* Christ hath done that to my hand: I am not called to go and *fulfil the law as a covenant of works;* Christ hath done that to my hand; I am not called to *work for life*, but to work for love to him that *worketh all my works in me, and for me;* and who, as he calleth me to this work of love, so promiseth to *work in me both to will and to do:* and therefore, in his name and strength, I will go forward, *making mention of his righteousness, and his only;* and, in his name, I will encounter and grapple with the devil himself, for Christ hath conquered him to my hand.

4*thly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to the *commission of sin:* he will suggest to them that it is but a little sin, and God will not be angry for a little sin; such as a lye in a droll, an idle word, *&c.* Can such a little sin endanger the soul? Now, to guard you against this temptation, consider,

1. That the *first sin* which brought all mankind into a miserable state, was, in appearance, but a *small* and *little* sin: it was but eating a little forbidden fruit, the tasting of an apple; yet, had it not been for Christ's satisfaction, it would have destroyed irrecoverably all the posterity of Adam. There was a man, Sirs, that gathered a few sticks upon the Sabbath-day; you would have thought that was but a little sin, yet God's thoughts are not your thoughts, for God thought that sin worthy of death, Numbers xv. 32, 33. Uzziah's putting his hand to the ark, and touching it when it uttered, seemed to be but a small sin, and yet you know he was smitten instantly with death for it, 2 Sam. vi. 7. It is dangerous to give even a little wrong touch to a tottering ark.

2. Consider the *nature* of every sin; though some by

are comparatively small, and others greater; that is, by reason of several aggravations, more hainous in the sight of God than others; yet, in themselves, none are small. The least sin is against an infinite God, and infinite authority; and so, objectively considered, an infinite evil; and therefore cannot be expiated without infinite satisfaction: and it is not little promises, or little threatenings that your little sins do slight; yea, there is no little ingratitude towards God in little sins: there is great unkindness to God in little sins. To displease God, your best friend, for a little sin, O ungrateful thing! *Is this your kindness to your friend? The wages of every sin is death eternal.* It is not little misery that every sin doth expose you to. Will you make light of the wrath of the infinite God? Then do not make light of little sins. In a word, remember that boldness in little sins will be an encouragement to greater. Sin is of an encroaching and bewitching nature; a little theft may open the way to a greater. The devil tempts people to go from one degree to another; he tempts them to the reverse of the *blessed man*, mentioned Psalm i. 1. He tempts them to *walk in the council of the ungodly;* having taken a walk with them, he tempts them next to *stand in the way of sinners*, which is more; and then having stood a while with them, he tempts them last of all *to sit in the seat of the scornful*, even to the height of wickedness. The devil first makes you sit down with the drunkard, then to drink with him, and at last to be drunk. Thus he leads people from unclean thoughts to unclean looks, words, and actions: therefore, let faith resist this temptation, and set you upon your watch against that which you call a little sin. No man that ever saw sin can truly call any sin little or small, nor can it ever be, till there be a little law to break, a little God to offend, a little guilt to contract, a little wrath to incur; all which are impossible to be, blasphemy to wish, and madness to expect.

5*thly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *unworthy apprehensions of God.* Satan may suggest very strange thoughts of God, very base thoughts of

God, moſt unſuitable apprehenſions of him, ſuch as are not to be ſpoken of; and the prince of this world hath much in us, who are ſo ignorant of God, to further theſe miſhapen thoughts of God. And to fortify you againſt theſe aſſaults, there are theſe two directions I would offer concerning the way how we are to conceive of God.

(1.) We are to conceive of him as *inconceivable:* for the thoughts we are to have of him are overwhelming thoughts. As long as we are merely active, and are able to maſter our thoughts of God, they are utterly unworthy of him. Whatſoever we know, comprehenſively, I mean, except we ſee it to be infinitely beyond us, that is not God, nor to be adored. I have read a dialogue between a Chriſtian and a Gentile: the Gentile ſeeing the Chriſtian very fervent in prayer, and ſeeing no image before him, aſked him, "whom he "worſhipped:" he anſwered, *I know not.* "Why "then do you worſhip him?" *I therefore worſhip him,* ſays he, *becauſe I cannot know him.* "It ſeems ſtrange, "ſaid the Gentile, to ſee one ſo ſeriouſly worſhip that "he knoweth not." *More ſtrange it is for one,* ſaid the Chriſtian, *to worſhip that which we can comprehend.* If we are not loſt in our thoughts of God, our thoughts of God are loſt. When we throw a ſtone into a pond, it makes circles larger and larger, and quickly they come to the ſhore: but if one ſhould throw a milſtone into the midſt of the calm ocean, though it would make larger and larger circles, yet it would not reach the ſhore, becauſe the ſtrength would be ſpent long before it come the length: So, when we think on the creature, we eaſily enlarge our thoughts ſo as to ſee an end of their perfection, and to be more than comprehenſive of their excellency; but when we think of God, we can never know him to *perfection,* Pſalm cxix. 96.—Here our knowledge muſt end in admiration, and our love in extaſy. Nay, we muſt conceive of God as above all words, above all knowledge, and above all admiration; above all love, and above all extaſy. But let us go to ſcripture, God knows beſt how to ſpeak of himſelf, and we may ſafely acquieſce in ſcripture expreſſions;

preſſions, Neh. ix. 5. *Thy name is exalted above all praiſe, above the praiſe of men and angels;* this is a very high expreſſion; but doth this reach him? Nay, if it did, God ſhould not be exalted above all praiſe, ſince this would reach him.

(2.) We are to conceive of God in *Chriſt;* Chriſt muſt be eyed in our addreſſes and acts of worſhip. All the former conſiderations ſet us but at a greater diſtance from God, and make us afraid of God, and fly from him, if we go no further; and, indeed, human reaſon can go no further. The utmoſt it can do, is but to think of mercy without a promiſe, which is a very arbitrary thing: and we ſee that God hath not ſhown mercy to fallen angels; for never was any devil converted; therefore we muſt neceſſarily have thoughts of Chriſt: *We are to honour the Son as we honour the Father;* and to honour him,

1. As a *King.* God hath exalted Chriſt *far above all heavens;* and hath *commanded us to do all in his name; And whatſoever you do in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus,* Col. iii. 17. He orders that *all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,* John v. 23. I ſhall relate a hiſtory to this purpoſe; it is this, Theodoſius the emperor having made an edict for the giving liberty for the Arians to preach; Amphilochius took this courſe for prevailing with the emperor to recal that edict. Theodoſius having made Arcadius co-emperor and Cæſar with him, ſeveral biſhops came to ſalute the emperor, to congratulate Arcadius, and to ſignify their conſent to Theodoſius his act, and by their reſpect and honour done to Arcadius, to ſhew that they took him for the ſucceſſor of Theodoſius in the empire; among others came this Amphilochius, biſhop of Iconium, who, after he had done obeyſance very ſubmiſſively to Theodoſius, was going away without ſhewing any reſpect to Arcadius, though he ſat by Theodoſius in all his royal robes; Theodoſius therefore called to Amphilochius, ſaying, "Know you not that I have made Arcadius, my ſon, "emperor with me?" Upon which Amphilochius went to Arcadius, and ſtriking him on the head, ſaid,

He was a very hopeful boy. Theodosius being very angry at this indignity done his son, commanded him to prison. Amphilochius, after he had gone a little way, turned back, saying, "O Theodosius, you are angry "that I give not your son the same honour I give you, "since you have made him equal in majesty to your- "self; and think you God will be well-pleased that "you suffer the Arians to abuse Christ, whom he hath "*set at his right-hand* in glory, and *will have all men* "*honour the Son, as they honour the Father.*" Upon which the edict was reversed.——I may say, Can you think that God will accept your worship to him, be it never so great; if you take no notice of Christ; be sure God will reject you and your services. But then again,

2. As God will have Christ to have the glory of his kingly office, so also of his *priestly*. Thus, suppose some great monarch, his son consenting, should lay upon his son the punishment due to some rebellious subjects, intending the son's honour as well as their pardon; the king sends forth a proclamation to them, to let them know that his son had satisfied justice, and procured a pardon: but many of them not trusting to this, would not come in, but would send the king gifts and presents to gain his favour: the emperor scorns their gifts upon that account; especially they thus robbing his son of the honour of making their peace, and thereby also plainly shewing, that they thought their crime was not so great, but a small matter would make it up, such as their gifts. Surely, if gifts would have done the business, his son had greater gifts than theirs; so that he needed not have died or suffered. The reddition of this simile may be easily made: God abhors our prayers, alms, and all our services, if we bring them as satisfactory to his justice, and sprinkle our puddly waters, our tears, upon the mercy-seat, and fill the holy place with the stinking savour, the stinking vapours of our prayers, which are unperfumed with the incense of Christ's righteousness, or that are no better than the reeking steams of a dunghill, the noxious

noxious vapours of an hollow cavern, or the ſmoke of ſome ſulphruous vulcano; I ſay, go to the holy place with theſe, inſtead of the incenſe of Chriſt's merit and interceſſion, is not to make atonement, but a provocation. This makes popiſh auſterities to be acts of pride, inſtead of being acts of mortification.

3. God will have him get the honour alſo of his *prophetical* office; for it is by his Spirit that he inſtructs and teaches us how to pray as well as perform. By his merit we have acceptance, and by his Spirit aſſiſtance. If a child ſhould write ſome excellent tract in the mathematics in Greek, we would infallibly conclude ſome did learn him, or dictate to him; ſo when you pray in the Spirit, and ſpiritually, for ſuch or ſuch ſpiritual bleſſings, who do you think dictates to you? This is not your mother-tongue; doubtleſs it is the Spirit of Chriſt that helps your infirmities. In a word, Chriſt by his active and paſſive obedience, whereby he hath ſatisfied juſtice, hath a wonderful intereſt with God, more than all the angels of heaven, inſomuch, that God delights to pardon the greateſt of ſinners for Chriſt's ſake: therefore, in prayer, conceive of God as a great, an infinitely great God, and as a God in Chriſt. Look on God through Chriſt, keeping the humbling ſenſe of your own diſtance and provocation; look upon God as through Chriſt the moſt compaſſionate fondeſt Father in the world; if he give thee not every thing thou thus aſkeſt, it proceeds not from his unwillingneſs to give, but thine unfitneſs to receive.

6*thly*, There are temptations with reference to *ſelf-murder:* Satan many times tempts people, particularly theſe that are coming to Chriſt, he throws them down and tears them, urging them to tear themſelves to pieces, to make away themſelves, and cut off the thread of their own life. This is a ſubject I ſeldom or never took occaſion to ſpeak in this manner upon; but now, I think it the more neceſſary that we are living in a time, wherein we are compaſſed about with awful inſtances of profeſſors being left under the power, and ſwallowed up with the violence of this temptation; yea,

yea, ſuch inſtances thereof, as have perhaps made the hearts of many here preſent to tremble. And ſince what hath been, may be, and not knowing but in ſuch a great company as is here, ſome one or other may be under ſuch temptations, I would offer theſe following advices ſhortly, to fortify you againſt theſe aſſaults.

1. Conſider that ſelf-murder is a ſin againſt the very *light of nature*, and the very *letter* of the *law of God*, Exodus xx. 13. *Thou ſhalt not kill.* And you may be ſure, that no thought of this ſort that enters into your heart, can be from God; for it hath the very image of the devil upon it; *He was a murderer from the beginning.*

2. *Yield not to the tempter;* for, though this is a temptation incident to God's people, inſomuch that, perhaps, there are few of them that have not been thus tempted, as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was, to whom the devil ſaid, *Caſt thyſelf down from the pinacle of the temple;* yet we read of no ſaint in ſcripture that yielded to the tempter. We are therein told of none but wicked wretches that deſtroyed themſelves, ſuch as Saul, Achitophel, and Judas; and ſure you would not deſire to be like them.

3. Conſider the *contrary practice of the ſaints in ſcripture*, both in their *beſt* and *worſt* time.—Old Simeon got an armful of Chriſt, and did he now attempt to cut off his own life, that he might win away to heaven? No; he wiſhes to be away, but he puts himſelf in God's will; *Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.* Paul is wrapt up to the third heaven, and his deſire of death muſt have been very great; yet he is content to ſtay till he was *diſſolved.*—Again, on the other hand, if pains of body, and terrors of mind, might contribute to ſtrengthen ſuch a temptation, Job did not want his ſhare of both; yet, inſtead of putting a period to his own days, though indeed *he curſed the day of his birth*, and *wiſhed for the day of his death*, yet he ſays, *All the days of my appointed time, will I wait till my change come*, Job. xiv. 14.

4. Con-

4. Conſider, that by ſuch horrid ſuggeſtions as theſe you are tempted to aſſume to yourſelf a *prerogative that belongs to God only.* It is he that lives for ever and ever that ſays, *I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal,* Deut. xxxii. 39. Your life is not your own to diſpoſe of; and as you cannot lengthen your life, ſo you may not ſhorten it. Therefore,

5. When you are thus tempted, *keep not the devil's counſels,* nor be thou his *ſecretary:* go to ſome faithful miniſter, or experienced Chriſtian, and tell them how you are tempted; for this temptation is partly conquered, when it is revealed.

6. Theſe who think they ſhall be *damned,* and go to hell when they die, it is the *greateſt madneſs* in the world for them to haſten their death. That the fear of hell ſhould make them leap into hell, is ſo contrary to all common ſenſe, that it is a wonder that any one ſhould ſo much ceaſe to be a man, not to ſay a Chriſtian, as to do a thing ſo contrary to nature, let be to grace. Let me aſk you, Can you endure to be among blaſphemers? Can you endure to blaſpheme God yourſelf for a year together, or an hour, and to ſpend it all in curſing and blaſpheming? If your ſoul abhor this, why will you leap into hell, a place of everlaſting blaſphemy? I read of one, who having been a long time tempted to make away herſelf, at laſt reſolved to do it, for the thoughts of the torments of hell were not prevalent enough to deter her; but as ſhe was going to deſtroy herſelf, it was brought to her mind, that in hell ſhe ſhould blaſpheme God for ever; which ſhe abhoring to do, upon that very account forbore the wicked action. If you were to be only in a ſtate of horror and torment, it were ſad enough; but for to put thyſelf into a ſtate of blaſphemy, how canſt thou endure to think of it?

7. Take heed of fighting againſt Satan with *human reaſon,* for this Leviathan laughs at the ſhaking of this *ſpear:* his ſcales are too cloſs to be pierced by it: but take the *ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,* which *divides between the joints and the marrow;* ſay to Satan, *It is written, Thou ſhalt not kill.*

8. *Pray,*

8. *Pray, pray much;* for the ſword of the Spirit muſt be wielded by the ſkilful arm of the Spirit. If thou goeſt out in confidence of thy being able to manage ſcripture by thy own ſtrength and ſkill, it will fare with thee, as it did with theſe, Acts xix. 15, 16. *They thought to caſt out devils by the name of Jeſus, but the devil rent them and wounded them, and made them to fly, ſaying, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?*

The great argument that the devil uſes to perſuade thee to ſelf-murder, is by perſuading thee that thou art a reprobate; but thou mayeſt conſider that Satan cannot know that thou art a reprobate: Was Satan, think you, on God's council, when he made his eternal decrees? Satan, who is not ſo much as one of God's hired ſervants, but a ſlave and a malefactor kept in chains, he is ſo far from being of God's council, that he is not ſo much as one of his family. If thou ſayeſt thy conſcience tells thee that thou art a reprobate; know, that no man living can tell who are reprobates; nor can any man know himſelf to be a rebrobate, except he hath committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which no man hath committed, that is ſorry to think he hath committed it; *For it is impoſſible that ſuch a man* ſhould *be renewed, either by or to repentance,* Heb. vi. 6.

Ye that walk in darkneſs and ſee no light, that are haunted with theſe temptations, conſider what a God we have to do with; we ſerve ſuch a great Lord, that all the monarchs of the world are beggars to him: and ſuch a gracious Father is our God, that the tendereſt parents in the world, and your deareſt friends, are tyrants, yea, wolves and tygers compared to him. And if we ſhould provoke them, as we provoke him, and they could as eaſily cruſh us as God can, we would quickly find that their tendereſt mercies are cruelty; whereas the ſeveral providences of God will be to thee, not like the *gall of aſps*, bitter and deadly, but like God's rubarb and aloes, by which thine iniquity ſhall be purged, *and all the fruit of it ſhall be to take away thy ſin;* and *though for the preſent the afflicting hand of*

God

God upon thee, is not joyous, but grievous, yet if thou art exercised thereby, it will bring forth in thee the quiet fruit of righteousness. Lay aside therefore your fears of hell, and hard thoughts of God.

But now, to add no more particulars, let me *exhort* you and all that hear me, to come to our Lord Jesus Christ, whatever opposition from hell stands in your way; and though the devil should throw you down and tear you as you are coming: yet Christ will lift you up, and heal you. Oh! what offends the world at our Lord Jesus? Will you tell me, sinner, what ails you at Christ? What disobliges you at his *person?* Is he not the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the chief among ten thousand?* Is he not the *rose of paradise*, the heart of heaven?—What ails you at his *offices?* Is he not a Prophet, that can teach you; a Priest, that can atone for you; a King, that can conquer for you?—What ails you at his *relations?* Is he not a Shepherd, to feed you; a Physician, to heal you; a Father, to pity you; a Husband, to cherish you?—What ails you at his *doing*, to fulfil the law for you; or his *dying*, to satisfy justice for you?—What ails you at his *yoke?* Is not his *yoke easy and his burden light?* his *ways pleasantness and his paths peace?*—What ails you at his *grace* and *glory?*

What ails you at him, Sirs? O! is he not worth your while, though you should run through hell to come to him? Is there not a heart in all this company that would fain be at him? Alas! would you rather go to the devil than come to Christ? That a comely Jesus cannot get two or three hearts in all this company, O pity, pity! and a thousand pities that the beauty of the Godhead cannot get a lover! Will you all be so mad as to run by Christ to other lovers, while he begs your love, as if he were upon his knees, and sends us to pray you in his stead to be reconciled with him, and come to him?

And therefore, Sirs, in his blessed name I pray you, go not by him. I beg it as the best favour you can do to my Master and me, that you come to him; I beseech you, by the *mercies of God*, and by the *bowels of*

Chriſt, that you come to him. He will welcome the worſt of you that will come to him; and if you but endeavour to ſtretch out the withered hand, or put out the withered heart toward him, he will help you to it, and embrace you with hand and heart both. He is content to come to you on any terms; and, will you not come to him? He ſtands at the door of your heart, and waits that you will but allow him to come in, and let him have acceſs. Have you a *hard* heart? He would be in to ſoften it: Are you pleaſed? Have you a *filthy* heart? He would be in to waſh it: Are you content? Have you a *wicked* heart? He would be in to renew it: Are you ſatisfied?

If you will not come to him, will you let him come to you, that he may make you willing? Conſider what is a-coming. O Sirs, is not a day of *calamity* coming? And why will you not come to Chriſt? Is not a day of *death* coming? And why will you not come to him? Is not a day of *judgment* coming? And why will you not come to him? Or, why come you to any thing elſe? Why come you to *ordinances*, if you will not come to Chriſt, for he is the life of ordinances? Why come you to *ſermons*, if you come not to Chriſt, who is the ſubſtance of all ſermons? Why come you to a *communion-table*, if you will not come to Chriſt; for he is the heart of the communion? Why do you hope for heaven, if you will not come to Chriſt, for he is the all of heaven, the heaven of heavens? A thouſand heavens are lighter than a feather when laid in the balance with him. Had I the tongue of a ſeraphim, I could not commend him enough to you; but, O may he commend himſelf to your heart, and cauſe you to throw your immortal ſoul into his ſaving arms, notwithſtanding all the down-caſting temptations of Satan, and whatever objections and oppoſitions ſtand in the way of your coming to him.

SERMON

SERMON C*.

DARK PROVIDENCES cleared in *due Time*.

JOHN xiii. 7.

—What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.

MY friends, the inviſible God acts like himſelf, even amidſt all the viſible and ſenſible tokens he gives of his preſence; ſuch as he hath been giving you at this occaſion: for, amidſt all his ways and workings that are ſeen and felt, yet ſtill his way is inviſible, unſearchable, and myſterious. How ſmall a portion do we know of him! What is ſaid of his preſence and abſence, or of his coming and going ſometimes, may be ſaid alſo of his doing: his coming near once to Jacob was dark to him; therefore he ſaid, *Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not.*— His going away from Samſon was dark to him; therefore it is ſaid, *He wiſt not that the Lord was departed from him.* And what is thus ſaid of his coming and going, may be ſaid of his doing, and perhaps of his doings among us at this occaſion; *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

We have here, in this chapter, the remarkable hiſtory of our Lord Jeſus, his waſhing his diſciples feet while he was at ſupper with them. It was great condeſcenſion to ſup with them; and yet greater to waſh their feet. How far Chriſt will ſtoop down to the neceſſities of his people, is amazing! It is obſerved, ver. 3.

* This ſermon was preached at Dunfermline, on Monday, July 2. 1736. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper there. It hath undergone ſix impreſſions.

that *Jesus knowing that the Father had committed all things into his hand, and that he was come from God, and went to God: he rises from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself, and poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet*, ver. 4, 5. All power and sovereignty was committed to him, yet the knowledge of his excellency did not hinder his condescension; in the view he had of his greatest glory, he evidenced the greatest humility. Neither the greatest sufferings he was just now to endure, nor the greatest honour he was advanced unto, could make him forget his poor people; his heart was set upon them as much as either upon his sufferings or his glory: why? for them he suffered, and for them he was to be glorified. And as the thoughts of his glory formerly did not hinder his condescension; so the possession of his glory now doth not hinder his stooping down to serve, yea, to wash, and save them. And the higher the Father hath exalted him, the more hath he fitted him for doing service to us in our low case and condition.

Now, we have here Peter's amazement, *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* verse 6. What! might he say, Thou, the Lord and Ruler of the world, dost thou stoop to do this for me, a worthless worm, a sinful man? Here is a paradox I cannot understand. O! but Christ's condescensions, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly matter of admiration. *Is this the manner of man? What are we, and what is our father's house?* It well becomes us, and the best of the sons and daughters of Adam to sit down at his feet and wash them with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of our head. But, O! what is this! dost thou wash my feet, Lord; O *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords?* Christ's abasing himself, and stooping so low to us, ought not to obscure his majesty, or make us think the less of him, as if he did what was too mean and unbecoming his grandeur; nay, if we have *faith as a grain of mustard seed*, the lower that he stoops towards us, the more will we honour him, and the higher thoughts will we have of him.

The

The text is an anſwer to Peter's amazement, *What I do*, ſays Chriſt, *thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* Where he tells him two things. 1. That the *deſign* of this work was at preſent hid from him. 2. That it ſhould be afterwards *revealed* to him. So ignorant was Peter of this work, which was afterwards explained to him, as ſignifying another inward waſhing, and giving to us a copy of humility, and of humble ſervice one towards another; ſo ignorant was he hereof, that his ſinful modeſty makes him refuſe this act of kindneſs and condeſcenſion; as you ſee in the following verſe. Though it be commendable to *fear the Lord and his goodneſs*, and to be amazed at his condeſcending grace and mercy; yet it is ſinful to run to that extreme of fear and trembling, as to ſhun, decline, and refuſe it: and though our Lord's ſtooping down be a great abaſement; yet it is the great error of the ſaints to think he will not reckon it his glory and honour to ſerve them. It is a part of their ignorance and error, when he ſtoops down to them with his bleſſing, to think that he hath forgot himſelf in his condeſcenſion, and that it is not poſſible he means ſuch favour to them.

In the general, we may learn from the words in their connexion with the text,

1. That when we *refuſe* any favour at Chriſt's hand, or ſhun any act of his condeſcending grace, as if unbecoming his greatneſs to grant it, or our meanneſs to receive it; we but diſcover our great ignorance and error.

2. Chriſt may be very *near* to his people, and doing great things to them in ſteps of gracious condeſcenſion; and yet they may be very ignorant of him, and of his acting; *What I do, thou knoweſt not.*

3. Every work of Chriſt towards his people carries ſomething more *great* and *precious* in the boſom of it, than we are capable, at the time, to underſtand; it is more loaden with wiſdom, power, goodneſs, grace, and faithfulneſs, than for the preſent we can apprehend: *What I do, thou knoweſt not now.*

4. Though

4. Though we cannot *dive* into the depths of Chriſt's counſel in his doing towards us; yet we ought to *reverence* and adore him therein, and to yield implicite obedience to his will, without quarrelling his way, or cenſuring his proceeding, while through darkneſs and ignorance we are ſuch incompetent judges thereof; thus did Abraham, Heb. xi. 8. *By faith, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

5. Our Lord Jeſus doth not *explain his mind* to his people at the firſt; what he intends by ſuch a work, and ſuch a promiſe, and ſuch a providence, until afterwards, that ſubſequent works explain preceding works and ſubſequent providences explain preceding ones.

6. Learn that we are therefore to *wait* upon him till he ſee fit to explain what may now be dark and hidden unto us; and we ſhall afterwards know and ſee what was the tendency of events that ſeemed moſt croſs and ſtrange. We muſt let Chriſt take his own way both in ordinances and providences: and we will find, in the iſſue, that it is indeed the beſt way. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

But paſſing all theſe, the point of doctrine I would ſpeak to is this.

OBSERV. *That the works of Chriſt towards his people may be very dark and myſterious, hidden and unknown to them, till afterwards he make them manifeſt.*

What I do, thou knoweſt not now, Peter; *but thou ſhalt know hereafter;* what need thou haſt of being waſhed, when thou ſhalt be guilty of the hainous crime of denying me thrice; or, when thou ſhalt, in the diſcharge of thy office, be employed as an inſtrument to waſh away the ſinful defilements of others.

But

But this doctrine may be verified from many inſtances.—Joſeph's dreams, as well as Jacob's being bereft of him, was dark and myſterious, till afterwards it was manifeſted in the courſe of providence.—— Abraham's call, to go and offer up his ſon, as well as his being ordered to go, *not knowing whither he went*, was very dark and myſterious till afterwards. —Eſther's marriage with Ahaſuerus was a kindly providence, but the deſign of it was not manifeſted till afterwards, to break Haman's cruel project. Chriſt manifeſted his glory to Peter, James, and John, upon the mount; but what he did they knew not the deſign of, till afterwards it appeared what eminent duties and trials was preparing them for.—Moſes little knew what was the myſtery of the manifeſtation he got of God, when he ſaw him in a flame of fire out of the buſh, and the *buſh burned, and was not conſumed;* and when God ſpake to him, ſaying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob:* Moſes hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God, till the Lord thereafter ſhewed what was the deſign of this appearance, and what ſervice he was calling him to.—Little did Iſrael know, when brought through the Red ſea, and ſinging triumphantly at the ſhore over all their drowned enemies, that this glorious appearance of God was to uſher in a forty years weary travel through the wilderneſs; and that what the Lord did then, by the hand of Moſes, was but typical of the great ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt.—Little did Paul, our apoſtle, while he was yet Saul the perſecutor, know what the Lord did when he appeared to him in his road to Damaſcus, till afterwards that the Lord ſhewed him what he was to do and *ſuffer for the name of Jeſus*——His ways, even of grace and mercy, are dark and unknown; therefore ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxvii. 13, 19. *Thy way, O God, is in the ſanctuary; thy way is in the ſeas, thy paths in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known.* Pſalm xxxvi. 6. *Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.* Pſal. cxi. 2. *The works of the Lord are great; ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein.*

The

The Lord works and carries on his gracious work, according to his rule of divine policy, that every one cannot penetrate thereinto. As great politicians carry on their designs in a way that ordinary onlookers cannot understand; so, much more doth infinite wisdom work, as it were, by a holy and majestic stratagem, and carries on his work in the dark, and in a way much hidden and unknown to us; for, *clouds and darkness are round about him*; and hence says the apostle, Rom. xi. 23. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Whatever then God hath been doing or saying to you at this occasion, think not that you are wise enough now, or that you know all that he hath been doing or designing by this work. *What I do, thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter.*

Having thus confirmed the doctrine, the method for the farther prosecution of the subject, may be the following.

I. To speak to some things the Lord doth towards his church and people, that are *dark* and *mysterious*, *hidden* and *unknown*.

II. To shew in what *respects* these things that he is doing for them may be hid and unknown to them.

III. Shew for what *reason* the Lord takes this way of doing, so hid, dark, and mysterious, that what he doth they *know not*.

IV. Observe some of the *seasons* when it is that he makes them know what now they are in the dark about, according to his word here, *Thou shalt know hereafter*.

V. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. We are to speak of some of these things the Lord doth towards his people that are *dark*, *mysterious*, *hidden*, and *unknown*.

Here

Here we might, to view it more distinctly, mention some *common* steps of his dealing with his people, that for a long time, may be dark and unknown to them; such as, what he doth with respect to their *outward state* in the world: what he doth by ordering such and such circumstances of prosperity or adversity in the world: what he doth with respect to their birth and education; his design in their being born of gracious, or of graceless parents; his design in ordering the bounds of their habitation, in such a spot of the world; his design in bringing them under such and such a ministry; to such a sermon, and such a sacrament, and such a table; why he casts such a book in their way: all may be hid and unknown to them till afterwards, that the Lord discovers what good and great designs he had thereby; what he doth by such a mercy, and such a judgment; such a word, and such a rod.

Again, we might condescend on what he doth with respect to their *inward spiritual state:* they may be greatly in the dark, as to what he is doing, when, on the one hand, he is convincing and awakening them; when he is humbling and breaking them; when he is deserting and forsaking them to their sense; when he suffers them to be tempted of Satan, and conquered by their lusts; and leaves them under the power of their enemies; denying their requests; refusing to help them in prayer, and to hear them; and seeming to reject and cast them off: what he thus doth, they know not till afterwards that he return.

And then, on the other hand, his *way* and *work* may be hid and unknown, even when he *returns*, so as they know not what he is doing: when he washes their feet, or condescends to give them some tokens of his pardoning and purifying grace, they may expect fair weather and clean way, or a prosperous journey, all their life-time afterwards; while yet he may be preparing them for a new storm.——They may little know what he doth when he is manifesting himself anew to them; they may reckon it is a preparatory for more glorious displays immediately: but they may be mistaken, and may find themselves tumbling down the

hill into a mire, or ever they are aware. They may little know what he doth, when, at a communion ſolemnity, he comes to looſe their bonds; and when he is comforting, ſtrengthening, or ſealing them, and ſpeaking in to their hearts, they may be thinking now that their *mountain ſtands ſtrong*, they ſhall *never be moved*, never be what they have been, nor doubt as they have done; yet quickly they may be at that with it, *Thou didſt hide thy face and I was troubled.* They may little know, when he brings them *to the banqueting houſe, and makes them ſit down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to their taſte*, what is he doing and deſigning; they may think now this is for my preſent comfort, now my cup runs over, and I hope it will continue running; while yet he may be feeding them for the hunger to come, victualling them for a voyage, laying in proviſion for a ſiege, preparing them for a battle, or perhaps anointing them for a burial. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

But here I ſhall mention ſome of the ſpecial works of God, that are covered with a cloud of majeſty, that his people ſeldom know what he is doing with them. As,

1. When his word and his work, his promiſe and his providence ſeem to *claſh* and *contradict* one another; this is a dark and hidden rod. *What he doth, we know not then*, when his diſpenſations ſeem, to human reaſon, to be driving on a deſign to defeat the promiſe; we cannot ſee through the cloud without an eagle-eye of faith, nor pry into the depths of his infinite wiſdom. Thus Moſes was ſent to deliver Iſrael out of Egypt, and to tell them the good news, that now the Lord was to deliver them from their bondage; but behold their bondage is increaſed, their ſlavery is doubled, they are filled with anguiſh, Exodus v. 21. Moſes himſelf could not well ſee thro' this dark cloud; and therefore complains to God of it, ver. 22, 23.— When things like this fall out to the church of God, or a child of God, that here is a promiſe, but where is the accompliſhment, when the quite contrary appears? Then

Then we are to think on his word, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

2. When his dealings and diſpenſations are ſo dark and unintelligible, that his people know not whether they ſpeak *mercy* or *wrath;* thus it was with Job, when he ſaid, *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me?* Job x. 2.; intimating, how utterly ignorant he was, as to what the Lord was intending by that ſtrange diſpenſation: in ſuch a caſe he is ſaying, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now.*

3. When the Lord comes with ſalvation in a *ſurpriſing* way; or, while his people are quite out of *frame* and *fitneſs* for it; as when it is ſaid, Iſa. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart;* and yet it follows, *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts to him, and to his mourners.* O what is this! will he ſhew himſelf a God of love to me, when I have been ſhewing my ſelf a devil of enmity againſt him! Or, while he ſurpriſes them with a mercy that they were never hoping nor waiting for; as Iſrael, when the Lord returned their captivity, were like them that dream.——His ſtately march this way is ſo hid from their eyes, that *what* he doth they *know not;* it is above their capacity to underſtand his ſovereign way.

4. When ſalvation comes, not only in a way of merciful ſurprize, but notwithſtanding all *appearance to the contrary;* when enemies are ſtrong and invincible, by them prevalent, and victorious over them; and when his *people's ſtrength is quite gone*, Deuter. xxxii. 36.—And when their *hope is gone*, and they *are cut off for* their *parts*, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. When in ſuch a point of extremity he ſteps in and ſaves; and ſaves, perhaps, by very unlikely means; as by the blowing of rams horns he throws down the walls of Jericho; or, by the ſtripling David, he kills the great Goliath, and defeats the army of the Philiſtines; in theſe ways there is much hidden majeſty. *What I do, thou knoweſt not.*

4. When hopeful beginnings of relief and salvation meet with *unexpected stops* and *hinderances*; and when the building of the spiritual temple, after the foundation is laid, comes to be retarded, and the work seems to go back rather than forward, as in the building of the material temple in the days of Ezra. How little do we understand what that means, when the Lord says, by Jeremiah to Baruch, Jer. xlv. 4. *Behold, that which I have built, will I break down*? When he suffers enemies to prevail, and *break down his carved work*, as *with axes and hammers*, who can see through such a dispensation, when it befals a church in general, as to the work of reformation; or a child of God in particular, as to the work of grace in the soul? *What* he doth, we *know not now*.

6. When the Lord's way towards the godly and the ungodly seems *unsuitable* to their different state, as if he frowned on his friends and favoured his enemies; how dark and hidden is his work herein? The prosperity of the wicked, and adversity of the godly was for a time a great mystery to Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. Yea more, sometimes the godly are left to be great a stumbling block to others; as when the Lord left Aaron to make the golden calf in the wilderness, that brought so much sin and wrath upon the people. I might instance David, Solomon, Peter, and others: how dark is this, and the like dispensations! And when, on the other hand, he imploys the wicked themselves to carry on his work, and makes their wicked designs contribute to advance his holy end and glorious design; as he did make the treason of Judas, the sentence of Pilate, the malice of the Jews to contribute for the work of our redemption. Surely, *what he doth, we know not*; his glorious works are hidden and unknown. He can necessitate enemies, contrary to their will, to do that which is a manifest forwarding of his work, as when the Philistines were constrained to send home the ark of Israel, 1 Sam. vi.

7. In a word, how dark and hid is his work, when he *cuts off instruments* that seem to be most fitted for it; and that either before their work be begun, as David, that

that prepared materials for building of the temple, but was not employed therein; or before their work be ended, as Moſes that brought Iſrael through the wilderneſs, but is taken away then, and not employed to end the work of bringing them in to the promiſed land, which he would gladly have done!—How dark and unknown is his work, when he calls them to believe what ſeems contradictory to *carnal ſenſe* and *reaſon*; as that Abraham ſhould have a ſon, when his body and Sarah's womb were both dead, who *yet believed in God, who quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were*? Or when he calls them to do that which ſeems expreſly againſt his own *revealed will*; as when Abraham was called to go and ſacrifice his ſon; this was a command of trial, and by faith, Abraham went all the length therein that was deſigned!—How dark is the providence and trial, when *duty* is ſeemingly ſet *againſt duty*, as when churchmen and prophets ſet upon Nehemiah, and preſs him to that as duty which was no duty; as you ſee the hiſtory, Neh. vi. 10,—14.? And when prophets are ſet againſt prophets, not only Baal's prophets againſt the prophets of God, but prophets of the Lord againſt prophets of the Lord; as in the caſe of the old prophet, pretending angelical information, and deceiving the man of God, 1 Kings xiii.?—Finally, how dark and unintelligible is his work, when he *lifts us* with the one hand, and *caſts down* with the other; when he *heals* with the one, and *wounds* with the other.——Thus the child, Mark ix. 19,—26. that Chriſt took in hand to cure, grew worſe; for, *The devil threw him down and tare him.* The ruler of the ſynagogue got Chriſt engaged to go along with him, and heal his daughter; but, behold what a wound is given, one coming from his houſe, ſaying, *Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Maſter!*——In theſe and the like works he ſays, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, To ſhew in what *reſpects* we may be *ignorant*, and in the *dark* about the Lord's doing towards us. And,

1. What

1. What he doth, as to the very *matter* of his work, may be hid and unknown, whether it be a common or a saving work; whether it be a merciful or a wrathful work, such as what Manoah and his wife met with, Judges xiii. 22, 23. He and she differed in their judgment about what they say; *Manoah said, Surely we shall die, because we have seen God. But his wife*, on the contrary, *said, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, would he have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hand? Or, would he have shewed us all these things?*

2. What he doth may be hid and unknown to them, as to the *manner* and method of his doing. His way of bringing about his purpose is very strange and unperceivable; for he is the God that *quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17. He brings things of nothing, and one contrary out of another, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *Light out of darkness*, life out of death, strength out of weakness, *Meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong.* How unknowable then to us is his work, who makes death the way of life, and wounding the way to healing, breaking down the way to building up, and losing the way to gain.

3. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *causes* of his working. There may be reasons of state that we are ignorant of: the reason why he doth doth so and so now; and why he desists at another time; why Zion is filled with judgment: why he shines on the counsel of the wicked, that pray not to him; and why the just and upright man is laughed to scorn. Surely touching *the Almighty we cannot find him out: for who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?* Rom. xi. 34.

4. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *beauty* of his work; *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* Where is the beauty and glory of this work? Is it becoming for thee to do so? We may be ignorant of the glory of divine wisdom that shines in his dealings; the glory of his holiness, grace, love, and mercy that shines therein, till afterwards he make his work appear.

appear. There is a beautiful connexion between what he hath done, what he is doing, and what he will do afterwards, that may be greatly hid, and the beautiful *ſeaſon* of his doing; he hath made every thing beautiful in his time. O! there is a luſtre in the very time of his coming, when he makes our time of need his time of love, our extremity his opportunity; yet for a time this beauty may be hid.

5. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *excellency* and greatneſs of his work; it may appear little, and low, and mean, as Peter thought when he ſaid, *Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet*? Yet in due time, it may appear to be a very great and excellent work. His greatneſs and grandeur is not hereby diminiſhed, but more and more diſplayed. *When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, they were like them that dreamed*, did not ſee or conſider the greatneſs of the work, till afterwards they ſee and ſay, *The Lord hath done great things for us*, Pſalm cxxvi. 1, 3.

6. What he doth may be hid and unknown, for a time, as the *neceſſity* of the work, and the *uſefulneſs* of it: part of Peter's meaning here, when he ſaid, *Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet*? was, Lord, what is the need of thy waſhing my feet? And therefore he ignorantly ſays in the following verſe, *Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet;* whereupon Chriſt opens up to him the abſolute neceſſity of what he now did, and deſigned by this work: *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.*—— There is a great need for all that Chriſt doth to us, though we be in the dark about it; and we ought to ſee a *need be* in every thing he doth; *If need be, you are in heavineſs through manifold temptations for a ſeaſon;* and if need be he will give a more joyful and heartſome ſeaſon; he knows beſt what you need, tho' you do not know.

7. What he doth may be hid as to the *variety* of his work, and the *changes* that befal us through the various changes and turns of his hand in working; tho' his heart and mind, his love and covenant, be unchangeable.

geable. Sometimes he will let his people ask what they will, and he will give them to the *half*, yea, to the *whole of his kingdom ;* and at other times they may cry and shout, and he shut out their prayers. Sometimes he will let them hold him, and not let him go, yea, and command him, as it were, *Concerning my sons and my daughters, command ye me :* thus he let Moses ask, and he said, *Shew me thy glory ;* and God says, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee ;* and yet behold, at other times, he will condescend to nothing, and seem inexorable ; *Though Moses, Daniel, and Job were to make intercession in the matter.* Who can understand this variety of his doing, and the secret reasons of the vicissitudes and changes, that hereupon befal his people in their inward frame and outward lot ?

8. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *end* and *design* of his doing, as to the *upshot* and *issue* thereof ; and what he is to bring out of that which now he doth. What he did in washing the disciples feet, was not known in the design of it till afterwards. Many things he hath done the meaning whereof was not know till afterwards. What he did, when he became man, when he became a *worm, and no man ;* what he did, when he lived our life ; what he did, when he laid down his life, and hang upon the cross between two thieves, were not understood till afterwards : and then it appeared that it *behoved him*, Heb. ii. 17. And what he doth at this communion, we know not now. The way that he takes may seem to be far about, and yet afterwards appear to be the only right way : and when he leads his people in a *way they know not, and in paths which they have not known*, may afterwards appear to be the best way for his glory, and for their good. And no wonder that we be in the dark, if we consider that the worker of these works is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, Isa. xxviii. 29. ; infinitely beyond all worldly politicians, whose projects and purposes are often hid from us, and much more may the infinitely deep counsels of God.

III. The

III. The *third* thing propoſed was, To offer ſome *reaſons*, why the Lord takes ſuch a hid myſterious and unknown way of doing with his people; that *what he doth, they know not now.* And,

1. It is to diſcover *himſelf* in a way ſuitable to himſelf and his own glorious perfections; and to ſhew that his *thoughts are not our thoughts, as his ways are not our ways.* If he ſhould work according to our thoughts and imaginations, and in a way not tranſcending our apprehenſions, how would it appear that he is JEHOVAH, a ſovereign God that acts like himſelf, whoſe will is a law to us, and a rule to himſelf; and whoſe *way is in the deep waters*, ſo as his *footſteps cannot be ſeen.*—Herein he ſhews his *wiſdom* to be hidden wiſdom, while his own people are apt to think that he is about to deſtroy his work in them and in his church, when he is upon his way to raiſe them up, and to bring down the enemy.—Herein he ſhews his *truth* and *faithfulneſs* miraculouſly when he comes with ſalvation, after he had wrought ſo long under ground, and out of ſight, and all hope was gone, but when it ſhines out from behind the dark cloud, then it appears with a more than ordinary glance and luſtre. O then, they ſee his *mercy is in the heavens, and his truth reaches to the clouds, and his faithfulneſs to all generations*, Pſalm cxix. 90. So that no changes or viciſſitudes here below can alter, no length of time can change his mind.

2. It is to diſcover his *enemies*, that they may appear to be what they are: what he doth for his people, they do not know themſelves; far leſs do hypocrites and falſe-hearted profeſſors know what he is doing for them, and what good he is doing for them. If the Lord were appearing viſibly for his children, whenever they are in a ſtrait, many falſe friends would take part with them, and ſeem to love and favour them; but that their enmity may be diſcovered, and they may be made manifeſt, he comes to his people in unknown ways, and hides his work; and then enemies ſhew themſelves openly to be enemies to God's people, while God doth not ſhew himſelf openly to be their friend. He may hide himſelf and his work from his friends to

diſcourage his enemies, and harden them in his righteous judgment; for, *whom he will he hardens*, Rom. ix. 18. by leaving them to themſelves.

3. It is to diſcover the *droſs* and *corruption* of his *own people*, that lies at the bottom of their heart unſeen; for, while he keeps his work hid from them, how does then their *unbelief* appear, in many doubts and ſcruples that riſe in their ſouls about his deſign? How doth their *impatience* appear, while he delays to clear up matters to them? Thus he ſhews them their ſin, and humbles them under a ſenſe of their ignorance. Such a diſcovery the pſalmiſt got when he went to the ſanctuary, and reflected on the miſtake he was under about what the Lord was doing: *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a beaſt before thee.* He makes them thus to know what is in them.

4. It is to diſcover their *graces* alſo, and to try and exerciſe them: thus he tries their *faith*, when they are to believe, though they do not know how his word ſhall be accompliſhed, as he did the faith of Abraham, Romans iv.—Thus he tries their *patience*, when they are to wait upon him, and they know not how long, Pſal. xiii. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*—Thus he tries their *hope*, when all human appearances and probabilities fail, and they can ſee no ground of hope from without; for, *that which is ſeen is no hope.*—Thus he tries their *ſubmiſſion* to him, and their *obedience* to him, while he calls to ſtoop to his will, even when he hides his deſign, and gives not account of any of his matters; that we may be *ſtill and know that he is God.*

5. In a word, he takes this hid and unknown way, that we may learn to *reverence* and *fear* him, and to wait upon him, till he teach us what we know not, and expound to us what we do not underſtand: *He is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*—In this way he curbs the *curioſity*, and checks the *pride* of poor man, who, when he is done, muſt go to ſchool again, and learn over what he learned before, and learn better.—In this way he ſtirs up to *prayer*, that

that they may take every piece of his work back again to him, that so he may make them know the secrets of his counsels, and the depth of his government; and that they may put no sense on what he doth but his own, which they are very ready to do, without waiting till he give them his own mind; that we darken not *counsel without knowledge*.—In this way he teaches us to be *modest* in our *minds*, and *sober* in our *sentiments* about what he doth, till once he hath done out his work, and told out all his mind; and that, in a sense of our ignorance, we may daily be learning to read and speak, to read his mind distinctly, and to speak of his actings knowingly; otherwise we cannot *order our speech by reason of darkness*.—In this way he not only quickens his people to prayer, but gives great matter of *praise* in the issue, when *what we know not now, he makes known afterward*, and brings *light out of darkness, yea, and makes darkness light before us*. How doth it accent their praise, when the dark clouds give way to the bright sun? The issue of his dealing is the more glorious, when afterwards his gracious and glorious design shall be made known ——But this leads me to the next thing proposed, namely,

IV. The *fourth* head, which was to point out some of the *seasons* when he makes them know afterwards, what now they are, or may be in the dark about: *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

1*st*, In general, this hath a reference to the *partial discovery* he gives of his mind in *this world*, and the *perfect* and *full discovery* he makes of himself in the *world to come*. Here he sometimes discovers what was dark and mysterious formerly in his work and dealing; but still it is only a partial display; *For now we know but in part, we prophesy in part: And now we see but through a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. But in the world to come, *that which is perfect shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away*; and then we shall *see no more through a glass, but face to face. Now I know*

in part, says the apostle; *but then shall I know, even as also I am known. At that day ye shall know*, says Christ, *that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*, John xiv. 20. Here we know him but as he is NOT, but then *positively*; for, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. Ye shall know hereafter perfectly. But then,

2*dly*, In particular, it hath a reference to some *special seasons*, wherein, even in this world, he gives his people to know afterwards what he doth, which at present they do not know or understand; and I shall touch at some of these seasons.

1. Sometimes the season of making known what he doth, is very *soon*, very *quickly* after the work is done, and so it was here; for, after Christ had washed his disciples feet, he explains what he designed by it, and that first to Peter, by shewing what washing he especially intended; so that without it, they could have no portion in the son of Jesse: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* And then afterwards to all the disciples he said, *Know you what I have done to you;* and so explains it further to them.—And as sometimes he very quickly explains his work; so he doth his *word* that was dark and unknown. Christ had said, John xvi. 17. *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, A little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father:* They were puzzled and perplexed about it, verse 18.; and hereupon, before Christ was done with speaking to them, he explains it to them, ver. 19,—28.; whereupon they say, ver. 29, 30. *Lo now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* Yet this knowledge that now they got was but imperfect, as Christ's following answer shews.

2. Sometimes the season of making known afterwards what he now doth, is very *long after* the work is done, or the word spoken, which they are in the dark about ——Our Lord may do great things, and speak gracious words to his people, and yet they may be

be in great darkneſs as to the meaning and deſign thereof for a long time. God met with Jacob at Bethel, and gave him a glorious manifeſtation of himſelf, and a ſweet promiſe of his preſence and bleſſing, and it was to him *the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17. But Jacob knew not what a feaſt this was to be unto him twenty years afterwards, when God gave him a new meal upon this old experience; ſaying, *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and where thou vowedſt a vow unto me*, Geneſis xxxi. 13. He knew not that it was to be a preface to twenty years ſervitude; and that the new remembrance and reflection upon it was to be a pledge of a new viſit of the like nature: that the recognition of an old Bethel, was to be a preface to a new Peniel. What do I know but it will take twenty or thirty years to explain what ſome have met with at this occaſion in Dunfermline. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* But whether it be in a ſhort time, or after a long time that he opens up the myſtery of what he does, he is ſure to chuſe the fit time, the appointed time, the beſt time; beſt for reaching the great ends of his glory and our good: *The viſion is for an appointed time, at the end it will ſpeak, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it: becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, beyond the due time, Hab. ii. 3.

Again, there are ſome *circumſtances of time*, wherein the Lord thinks fit to communicate the knowledge of what was dark and myſterious, hidden and unknown in his work and doing to his people.—Sometimes after he hath hid himſelf in the dark from them in *private*, he meets with them in *public*, and tells them all his mind: when David went to the ſanctuary, Pſal. lxxiii. he got a reſolution of his cloudy caſe, and found, that even at the time his *feet was almoſt gone, and his ſteps had well nigh ſlipt*; that even then the Lord was holding him by his right-hand. They have ſeen his *power and glory in the ſanctuary*.—Sometimes he hides himſelf in *public*, and gives them more of his mind

mind in a *secret* corner: *When the disciples were alone, he expounded all things to them*, Mark iv. 34. What they hear, and yet do not know in public, he clears it up when he and they are alone. Hence the church affects retirement, Song vii. 11, 12. *Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages; let us go up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish*, &c.; *there will I give thee my loves*: sweet and sensible communion is sometimes reserved for a corner.—Again, sometimes what he doth, he makes them know after a black and long night of *desertion*, when he surprises them with a new visit, and makes them say, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*—Sometimes he explains his mind more clearly to them, after he hath tried their *faith* and *patience* for a while, and brought them into great tribulation. John, in the Revelation, never had so much of Christ's mind, even when he leaned upon Christ's bosom, as when he was persecuted and banished into the isle of Patmos. Thus it was with Ezekiel, when he was among the captives by the river of Chebar, then was the heavens opened, and he saw the visions of God.—Sometimes it is after *deep humiliation* and *fervent supplication*; such as that of Daniel, chap. ix. 20, 21. Then he is informed by the angel Gabriel of some great things he was in the dark about before.—Sometimes the Lord hath remarkably countenanced his people with great and glorious discoveries of his mind, when they have set days apart for *prayer* and *confession*, afflicting themselves before him. But, Oh! where are the Christians of former generations, some of whom would have shut themselves up in their closets for many days, and got their meat shut in to them at the window, and holes of the door!—Again, sometimes he reserves the discovery of what he is doing, till the time that he gives a more full and plentiful *out-pouring of the Spirit*. *What I do*, says Christ here to Peter, *you know not now, but you shall know* partly, just now after I am done with washing your feet; I will explain it, but you shall know afterwards more clearly and distinctly in the day

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of Pentecoſt, when the Spirit ſhall be poured out; and hence ſee Acts ii. how Peter then preached and publiſhed the doing, dying, and riſing of Jeſus: What he did was then no more a myſtery to him. And you ſee John xvi. 26. the Spirit, the Comforter is promiſed for this very end, to *teach us all things, and to bring all things to rememberance, whatſoever Chriſt hath ſaid unto us.* And when the Spirit is more plentifully afterwards communicate, then he brings Chriſt's words and works to rememberance, in ſuch a manner, as to tell us what he intended by ſuch a word and ſuch a work; what he ſaid and did at ſuch and ſuch a time.

Again, ſometimes he doth it a little *before their death;* he ſometimes has anointed them before their death with eye-ſalve, and let them ſee farther than ever they ſaw; as it was with old Jacob, when his natural eyes were dim, he ſaw Shiloh coming, to whom the gathering of the people ſhould be; he ſaw a little further, then, I think, than he did either at Bethel or Peniel, and ſomething more concerning Chriſt was then explained to him than he knew before. Thus it was alſo with old Simeon before his death; he had got a believing ſight of Chriſt before, but now he got an arm-full of Chriſt, and a more ſenſible ſight than before; *Now, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace; for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* I have known ſome get very clear manifeſtations of Chriſt before their death.

In a word, ſometimes at *death itſelf;* though ſome of the Lord's ſervants and ſaints have died in much darkneſs, yet others have got Chriſt's doings explained at death, that have been hid from them all their days before. Death may make a breach among forty or fifty experiences, and bring them down to two or three perhaps. But death to ſome has multiplied their experiences, and made them go *through the valley of the ſhadow of death,* triumphing in God's everlaſting love. I read of Adolphus Clarebachius, who had been all his lifetime kept under much bondage; when he became a martyr, and went to the ſtake to

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be burnt, he then said, "I have lived a most melancholy and dejected life till this day; but now I believe there is not a merrier heart in the world than mine." What the Lord did, by ordering his former dejection he knew not, till now that it appeared the Lord's design by his grievous and heavy life, was to be a lane and avenue to that glorious and joyful death. Some have gone thro' the dark trance between time and eternity with more light and knowledge of the Lord's mind and works than ever they had. Jacob never had a brighter view of his old Bethel-visit than when he was upon his death-bed, and had all his children about him, and some of his children's children: he now saw more clearly what God had done, and what he was further to bring out of the Bethel-promise, with reference to his numerous issue, and their future possession of the land of Canaan; and therefore he begins his dying words with what past between God and him at Bethel, Genesis xlviii. 3, 4. *God Almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and said, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee; and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession.* Then might he say, I had neither wife nor children; but now I see my children, and my children's children; and I see what God is about to do with them: and so he prophesies of their future increase and various circumstances and appearances they were to make in after-ages. Thus his Bethel-blessing was extended, and explained more clearly to him in his dying moments. What you met with, believer, in such a place, and what you have met with in Dunfermline, what he hath been doing at former occasions, or at this occasion, may be, you do not see through at present, perhaps the further explication of it is reserved for a death-bed feast unto you, when he shines upon his former words and works, and makes you sing of his salvation, and say, "O! I remember what he said "to me in such a place, and what he did to me at a-"nother. What he designed by it was dark and un-

"known

" known to me, but now I see more of his mind; I see " he hath been as good as his word, and that *he hath* " *done all things well.*" *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*, perhaps sooner or later, even before you go into eternity.

V. The *fifth* and *last* thing proposed was, To deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole. Is it so, *That the works of God, the doings of Christ Jesus, towards his people may be so dark and mysterious, hid and unknown, till afterwards he make them known?* Hence,

1. See that we have great cause to be *humble* and *sober:* whatever the Lord hath been doing among us at this occasion, let us not think that we know all that he hath done, since he is saying, *What I do, thou knowest not now.* Let that great question humble us under a sense of our own ignorance, Job xi. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?* Think not you have learned your lesson perfectly; the greatest believers on earth are but scholars as long as they are in the body. Divine light shines gradually more and more to the perfect day of glory; therefore, whatever they see they need to see more clearly; whatever they are taught they need to be taught over again more perfectly:——What a small portion of God do we know?

2. Hence see, what reason believers have to *long for heaven*, since clouds and darkness will never be altogether dispelled till the beatifical vision of God and of the Lamb. That *city hath no need of the sun, nor the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. I saw no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it*, Rev. xxi. 22, 23. It may be said of all the great works of God that at present he doth, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*, when time shall discover it, even the Lord's time, the fit time; and even when that time hath made the disco-

very of what he was doing formerly, it may be also said of that discovery, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter;* when eternity shall discover it, and heaven make it manifest in another and more glorious manner; then all his dealings with his people will be conspicuous; and all his designs appear, that before were dark and mysterious.

3. Hence see, that the church and children of God, while in this world, must not think of being *exempted from clouds* and *darkness*, even when they have the Lord near to them; for, *Clouds and darkness are round about him*, Psal. xcvii. 2. And he makes the *clouds his chariots* wherein he rides towards his people. It is true, the clouds that surround him have sometimes a dark side, and sometimes a bright side; yet even at the brightest, it is but a cloud, wherein he appears, and they know not how far he is to ride upon it, how soon it will disappear, and what weather it prognosticates. The Lord designs to give his people, while here, a proof of his promised care, Isa. xlii. 16. In leading *the blind in a way they know not, in paths they have not known: making darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.* And hence they are mostly kept in the dark; sometimes about providences befalling the *church*, while heavy clouds hang over it: sometimes in the dark about *duty* relating to the cause of God, in the day wherein they live, and the *word of his patience;* sometimes in the dark about their *state*, and their assured interest in Christ; sometimes in the dark, as to *comfort*, when destitute of that necessary consolation their heavy case may require; sometimes in darkness about the *word* of God, when a vail is drawn over it; sometimes about the *work* of God, and what he is doing, when they cannot see his steps, nor hear his voice, nor read his mercy and loving kindness by reason of darkness.

4. Hence see, that the Lord's time of *doing* is not always his time of *shewing* what he doth. He takes his own time of working, and his own time of shewing his work. He may *wash his disciples feet*, and not let them understand what he is doing, till a more proper time, where in

wherein he will shew the glory of his work which was hid. Hence prays the church, Psalm xc 16. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.* And his time of shewing himself and his work is ordinarily very surprizing and unexpected; may be, it is when their night is at the darkest, and their darkness at the blackest, then, according to his promise, *To the upright there arises light in darkness*, Psal. cxii. 4. *He makes darkness light before them; When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.*—— Sometimes indeed he manifests his work to them, when they are *longing* and hoping: *For he satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry with good things*, Psalm cvii. 9. ——And yet sometimes he doth it, when they have *lost hope*, as it were, and are least looking for it; *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever*, Psalm ix. 18. Intimating, that they may be forgotten for a long time, but they *shall not always be forgotten;* their hope and expectation may seem to perish for a long time, but they *shall not be forgotten for ever:* when it is just at the perishing, he pities poor perishing hope.——Sometimes to shew his regard to holiness and strictness of walk, he makes his glory appear to them, when they are exercised in *practical piety* towards God and man. Hence, *To the upright there arises light in darkness*, Psal. cxii. 4. And, *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him*, John xiv. 21, 22. And it is in this way we are to expect his coming to manifest himself and his work.——Yet sometimes, to shew the sovereignty of his grace, he manifests himself and his gracious work, when their religion is at a *low ebb;* their praying frame is gone; yea, and their backslidings multiplied, and their rebellion increased; Isa. xliii. 22. *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;* yet upon the back of the challenge, that he may melt their hearts with his surprizing grace, he says, verse 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

Isaiah lvii. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him:* And *I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.* Some think even this is the season the text hath a relation to, *What I am doing, by washing thy feet, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* When after *thou hast denied me thrice*, I will give thee a look, and thou shalt *go out, and weep bitterly.* When, upon the crowing of the cock, thou shalt run away to a corner, and reflect upon thy grievous sins, and my gracious look, then shalt thou, with a melting heart, see more into the mystery of this washing, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*—— Again,

5. Hence see ground of enquiry, what the Lord hath been *doing*, and what you know thereof, and if it be hid and unknown to you or not.

[1.] Enquire what hath the Lord *been doing*, or what *is he doing* towards you at this occasion; hath he been stooping down to wash your feet?

QUEST. *When may Christ be said, in a spiritual sense, to stoop down and wash his disciples feet?*

ANSW. (1.) Then he may be said to wash their feet, when he shews them their *foul* feet. O Sirs, hath the Lord been shewing to you, by his convincing grace, what foul feet, what filthy affections you have, what a filthy heart, and what a filthy walk and conversation you have had? Hath he made *the iniquity of your heels to compass you about?* as it is, Psalm xlix. 5. Hath he been making you say, with shame and sorrow, *Iniquities prevail against me? O wretched man that I am!* How have I grieved his Spirit, and defiled my feet, by running into the mire? O was there ever such foul feet as mine, that carried any to a communion-table.

(2.) Then he may be said to wash their feet, when he makes them *dip* their foul feet into the *fountain of his blood, opened for sin and for uncleanness.* Hath he been shewing you the fountain of sin and wickedness that

that is in you, and the fountain of cleanſing and purification that is in Jeſus; and making you, by faith, to run in to this fountain of the Lamb's blood, that *cleanſeth from all ſin?* If thus he hath ſprinkled his blood upon your heart and conſcience, and intimate peace and pardon in his blood, and made it precious to you, not only as pardoning, but alſo purifying blood, then he hath indeed been waſhing your feet.

(3.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when he makes them, with the woman, Luke vii. 38. that *ſtood behind him weeping, to waſh his feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hair of your head.* Have you been admitted to ſuch nearneſs to him, that with humble boldneſs you have laid yourſelf down at his feet; the woman was aſhamed to look Chriſt in the face, but came behind him *weeping?* Have you been filled with holy humble ſhame, and confuſion of face before him becauſe of your ſinfulneſs, and in the view and apprehenſion of his being *pacified towards you*, Ezekiel xvi. 63.

(4.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when they are made to waſh their feet in the *blood of his enemies;* as it is ſaid of the righteous, *He ſhall waſh his feet in the blood of the wicked, and rejoice when he ſees the vengeance*, Pſalm lviii. 10.: ſo we may ſay of believers, when Chriſt is waſhing their feet, they deſire to ſee the heart-blood of their and his enemies, their unbelief, atheiſm, and all their luſts and idols: their joy would be to ſee the vengeance of God upon them; they are filled with holy *revenge* againſt them, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The reaſon of this being an evidence of his waſhing, is, becauſe, when he waſhes them, he doth it according to that promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *I will ſprinkle clean water on you, and you ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.* Now, hath he thus been waſhing your feet?

[2.] Inquire what you know, with reference to his *work:* if you know that he hath been waſhing you, this is more than ſimple waſhing; and in ſuch a caſe, he is ſaying to you in effect, *What I do, thou knoweſt, and thou ſhalt know* more *hereafter.* It is one thing to be

be waſhen, another to be aſſured of it; and if he hath given you the aſſured knowledge of his work, ſurely ſomewhat of Peter's amazement will fill your heart, *Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet?* O Sirs, wonder, wonder men and angels, that the Lord of glory ſhould have ſtooped down ſo far below himſelf to ſuch a filthy worm as to waſh me in his blood! *What ſhall I render to the Lord? Is this the manner of man?* But this is not every one's allowance. O be thankful and humble; and whatever you know this way, remember you know but in part, and there is much more in what he doth than yet you know. There are other believers here, that perhaps know not all what Chriſt hath been doing with them; *He hides his face, and they are troubled.* They cannot ſay he hath been waſhing their feet, but rather wounding their hearts, and frowning upon them; ſtanding at a diſtance, and keeping them at the back of the door; the *Comforter that ſhould relieve their ſouls being far away.* Well, as the believer, that is clear, knows not how ſoon he may be under a cloud: ſo the believer that is under a cloud, knows not how ſoon the ſky may be cleared, and both theſe caſes may be paving the way for what is a-coming, when the Lord's deſign breaks out: therefore, whatever be the caſe, let this word be ſtill the conſideration, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*—— Therefore,

6. Hence let us ſee the duty of all, both *ſaints* and *ſinners* in this great meeting of people. It yields ſpecial inſtruction to all the ſaints and children of God, whatever their caſe be, and whatever the Lord is doing, eſpecially if his way be hid and unknown, dark and myſterious in any reſpect to them; and firſt to diſciples.

(1.) It is your duty, O believer, to *mark* what the Lord is doing; to *obſerve his ſtately ſteps and goings in the ſanctuary*, though they be very hid and unknown; yea, the rather that they are dark and myſterious, they are the more worthy to be known.——It is a mark of the graceleſs, they conſider not the operations

tions of his hand. *But whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving-kindneſs of the Lord.* This obſerving comprehends a believing that the Lord is carrying on his work, tho' clouds hide him from our ſight, and a paſſing a ſuitable judgment on what he is doing, conſtruing all for the beſt; this is to *conſider wiſely of his doing*, Pſalm lxiv. 9. Believing that all is good, and for the good of his people, we ſhould conſider his work, till we obſerve his loving-kindneſs therein. Therefore,

(2.) It is your duty never to *judge harſhly* of his doings, however hid and unknown they may be; yea, however heavy and afflictive: will you meaſure God's love by outward diſpenſations, or even by inward deſertion? Though, indeed, it becomes you to weep when the bridegroom is away, as well as to rejoice when he is preſent; yet meaſure not his love by his providence, but by his promiſe. It is the fooliſh child that thinks the mother hath caſt him off every time ſhe is out of ſight, or has given him out of her arms; therefore, ſay not when he hides himſelf, "Oh! his "heart is changed; his love is gone; all he did was "but a deluſion; there is no hope; all is undone!" Whatever be his dealings, though you ſhould not be able to give an account of them; yet what you cannot believe by knowing, you muſt know by believing: we muſt believe when we cannot know: wink at providences, and open your eyes to promiſes.

(3.) Do not *quarrel* and *queſtion* what you do not know, but ſtoop down, and ſtand in awe; *Be ſtill, and know that he is God*, and will act like himſelf; ſet not *limits to the holy One of Iſrael*, by concluding that he will not come, becauſe he comes not in the time and way that you imagine. Be afraid to think that you could manage otherwiſe, and do better than infinite wiſdom ſees fit to do. What abominable pride is that! O entertain high thoughts of him, whoſe ways are ſo high above your reach, that what he doth you know not: and if his works are ſo high above you, how high and unſearchable are his counſels; yet, O ſtill remember, whatever clouds are, or may be in your

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ſky, he hath eſtabliſhed a firm connexion between black diſpenſations and fair promiſes.

(4.) If you would know more of what the Lord is doing, you muſt ſtudy to be *practical Chriſtians*, and to walk in the fear of the Lord; for, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, Pſal. xxv. 14. The nearer you live to God, the more may you expect to know of his mind, and to be led by an unſeen hand in a dark day; for, *The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his ways:* ſtudy therefore, to walk humbly with your God; and *what he doth, tho' you know not now, you ſhall know hereafter.*

(5.) Be not *proud* and *lifted up;* if you know more than others, and if he be uſing you as friends, according to John xv. 15. *Henceforth I call you not ſervants, for the ſervant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends: for all that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* And, *leſt you be exalted above meaſure*, think not ſtrange though he ſhould order a *thorn in the fleſh* for you, and a croſs to keep you down; remember how formerly the croſs hath born down your pride, reſtrained your predominant, and put you to your prayers, and ſent you groaning to a God in Chriſt. Be not proud of what you know; for, though you be in higher favour than ſome of your neighbours, you know not what weather is coming, nor what ſtorms may blow upon you, or upon the church of Chriſt; or whether this be your laſt communion.

(6.) If what he doth be dark and unknown to you now; O *wait upon him* who ſays, *You ſhall know hereafter.*—O wait upon him *believingly;* when his work is dark and hid to you, it is the proper ſeaſon for faith to bud and bring forth: *I will wait upon the Lord, that hides his face from the houſe of Jacob*, Iſa. viii. 7. Even when promiſed things look like improbable and impoſſible things; yet, having the firm word of God that cannot lye nor change, there you are to reſt as anchored upon that immoveable rock, and ride out all ſtorms of carnal reaſonings and corrupt ſuggeſtions.—Wait upon him *patiently; The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſ-*

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fed are all they that wait for him. Pſalm xl. 1, 2. *I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſhed my goings; and he put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſe unto our God.* Whatever be his diſpenſations, though *he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him;* whatever dark clouds appear, either in his work, or his word. The poor woman of Canaan met with many diſcouraging things, even in her application to Chriſt: at firſt he anſwers her not a word; and when he ſpeaks a word, the firſt thing he ſaid, ſeeming to exclude her out of his commiſſion; *I am not ſent, but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* Alas! now might ſhe ſay, I need pray no more, I am a caſt-away! Nay, but ſhe goes on, ſaying, *Lord, help me:* then he calls her a *dog;* yet ſtill ſhe waits, and then gets a merciful and marvellous hearing; *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.*——Go on thus, believer: O incredulous believer, give him truſt, and give him time, and he will clear all to you in the iſſue, though it ſhould be *through fire and water,* that *he brings you to the wealthy land.* You have his promiſe ſealed with his precious blood, and his ſolemn oath, that when you go *through the fire and through the water, he will be with you,* whether you diſcern him or not. You know not now what he doth or deſigns; you know not what *deep* ſteps are before you in point of *trouble;* but with his promiſe in your hand, you may ſay as it is, Pſal. lxxi. 20. *Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken me again, and ſhall bring me up from the depths of the earth. Thou ſhalt increaſe my greatneſs, and comfort me on every ſide.*—You know not what *foul* ſteps are before you in point of *ſin.* Now I am waſhing thy feet, might Jeſus ſay to Peter, but thou knoweſt not that this is but a dark ſpecimen of another ſort of waſhing you will very ſoon need; *For before the cock crow twice, you will deny me thrice,* notwithſtanding your preſent reſolution, *That though all men forſake me, yet will not thou.* You know not now, that you will fearfully defile your feet, even after I have waſhen them.

O wonderful Jesus, that he should wash the feet he knows will be so soon in the puddle again! But whatever should come about, though Satan, through his temptations should hurry you into the mire of sin; yet beware of being hurried on the back of that into the depth of despair; for that is what the devil drives at, that he may make you affront both the law and the gospel of God at once; that having tempted you to dishonour his name, by breaking his commandments in the law, he may thereupon tempt you to discredit his grace, by despairing of any good from him by the promise of the gospel: therefore, O believer, see the need of waiting and watching every moment, and the need of the Lord's washing and watering every moment, according to the promise, Isaiah xxvii. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment.* Think not that one washing or watering now will do your business; though, through the Lord's shining upon you, you were in a heaven of joy and consolation this moment, you know not but, through his hiding and withdrawing, you may be in a hell of sin and sorrow the next moment; and though our glorious Lord were washing your feet this moment, I cannot promise, but before the cock crow twice, your feet will be as dirty as ever they were: therefore, O wait and depend upon him for washing and watering you every moment.

O beware of *security;* for you never got so much of his grace and fulness one moment, as shall allow you liberty to slacken your dependence upon him in the next. In this way of waiting upon him, though now you know not what he doth, *Yet you shall know hereafter*, and he will give you occasion to see him bring his work, though it should be through terrible ways, to an amiable issue, and give occasion to say, as Psalm lxvi. 5, 6. *Come and see the works of the Lord; he is terrible in his doings towards the children of men; he turned the sea into dry land, and there did we rejoice in him.* He turned a sea of tribulation into a dry land of consolation; and verse 10. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul.* What he doth now, by all the blinks and showers, the vicis-

viciſſitudes and changes, the ſtorms and calms of your caſe, the dark and myſterious ways he takes you thro', he will come, ſoon or late, afterwards and explain to you, ſaying, as it is Pſalm lxxxi. 7. *Thou calledſt in trouble, and I delivered thee; I anſwered thee in the ſecret place of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.* Iſaiah xlv. 5. *I girded thee, though thou didſt not know me. What I do, thou knoweſt not now;* it may take ſome days or years to explain what he now doth: however little or much you know; perhaps a day of approaching trial will make you know more; a day of death may make you know it better; but the day of glory beſt of all. *You ſhall know hereafter*, believer, partly on earth, and perfectly in heaven; graciouſly in time, and glorioufly through eternity.

I ſhall now conclude with a word to *enemies*, to *ſinners*, that are yet utter ſtrangers to our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. O ye that are deſpiſers of the Lord of glory, though he hath been *ſet forth evidently crucified before you* at this occaſion, What ſhall I ſay to you? May not I tell thee, O ſinner, how this text may be applied to you? Chriſt is ſaying even to thee, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* He hath been doing ſomething *before your eyes*, at this occaſion, and you know it not; yea, he hath been doing ſomething *to you* that you do not know and conſider; though he hath not been waſhing your feet, yet he hath been offering to waſh you, and not your feet only, but your head and hands; for the believer that is waſhed already by regenerating grace, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet; but you need that your head and heart be waſhen, as well as your hands and feet. You need to be waſhen from the filthineſs of your ſtate, as well as from the filthineſs of your ways: but whatever waſhing you need, he hath been offering it, and himſelf to be the doer of it, ſaying, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.* And to this moment he is offering himſelf to you, ſaying, *Wilt thou be made clean?* wilt thou let me waſh thy heart, and hands, and feet? No, no, ſays unbelief; thou ſhalt never waſh my feet, it

is too much for Christ the Son of God to do; I will wash myself, and repent, and turn religious against some other time; for the present, I am otherwise taken up. Will you resolve to put no employment in Christ's hand? Is that the way you treat his kindly offer, when he opens the door of mercy to you, and calls you by this minister and that minister, and the other minister, all telling you, that you shall be welcome for all your sins, and saying, *Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out?* Be who you will, young or old sinner, behold the humble Jesus makes the most condescending offer to you, that ever men or angels heard. O filthy sinner, will you let me wash you; *For, if I wash you not, you have no part in me*, nor ever shall?

If you are so wedded to your filthy lusts, that you are not willing to be washen from them, I must tell you, that you know not what you are doing, and know not what Christ is doing; *but you shall know hereafter*, either in a way of wrath, to your great confusion; or in a way of mercy, to your deep remorse.

1. What he doth by this offer to wash you, *you shall know hereafter* to your *confusion.* Perhaps, when you are gasping for breath upon a death-bed, and conscience awaking, shall begin to say, O many a sweet offer of Christ and mercy did I get, and slighted, and this amongst the rest, when he offered to wash my feet, and I refused and rejected his offer! *You shall know hereafter*, when you shall hear the awful doom pass against you, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;* and when, with *weeping and gnashing of teeth, you shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, apostles, and followers of the Lamb in the kingdom of heaven, and yourself shut out*; and when thou shalt think and say, "O vile "wretch that I was, I might have been yonder in glo-"ry; but I was taken up with the vain world, and "my vile lusts, and was unwilling to be washen from "them, and now I must be lodged in hell among de-"vils and damned reprobates for ever." Oh! think upon this before it be too late!

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2. If mercy prevent you after this refusal: *What he now doth, you shall know hereafter* to your bitter *remorse.* If ever the Lord have mercy on you, and manifest himself to you, oh! how will it go like a sword to your heart, and pierce you to the quick, when he shall say, *I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt!* I am Jesus your Saviour, whom you slighted! I am he whose cries you contemned, and whose kind offers you disregarded: when I offered to wash your feet, you lifted up your heel against me; and now, *How shall I put thee among the children?* How shall I deliver thee, that hast so undervalued my kindness, and trampled on my blood, wherein I offered to wash you? What a knell will this be to your heart, if he have mercy upon you afterwards: and, O that the bitter remorse were begun in your bosom this moment, with a wo is me that I have slighted such an offer so long. O! is he saying to the vilest sinner in this company, Come and let me wash you! O then, were your heart saying, Lord, come, and welcome! O come and wash my conscience from the guilt, and my heart from the filth of sin; it were good. Are you cordially willing, and presently willing, and universally willing to be washen in his blood *from all your filthiness*, and *from all your idols*? Why then? I hope he is doing something upon your heart and will, which, though now you cannot understand, he will explain mercifully in due time; for it is his own promise: *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

SERMON

SERMON CI*.

The GREAT TRUMPET of the *Everlasting Gospel.*

ISAIAH xxvii. 13.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem.

MY friends, it is only the trumpet of common providence that hath, perhaps, gathered you together to this place, you hearing the news go thro' the country, that the sacramental feast was to be kept here, and so you have come along with the rest; but it is the great trumpet of special powerful grace that can gather perishing sinners together to Christ, and make them come to him for life and salvation, liberty and redemption from their spiritual captivity. And, O may the sound of this trumpet be so heard, as many may come to Jesus at this occasion, that they may worship the Lord spiritually in his holy mountain!

These words are to be considered, first in their *literal*, and then in their *typical* and *spiritual* meaning, in order to deduce a suitable doctrine from them.

1st, As to the *literal* import of the words, they relate to the church of Israel that was scattered, their be-

* This sermon was preached at Abernethy, upon Saturday, July 24th, 1736. Being the preparation-day before the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. It hath undergone six impressions.

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ing gathered together and brought back to Jeruſalem. Though the body of the people was abandoned as a people of *no underſtanding*, ver 11.; yet mercy was laid up in ſtore for ſome that were to be gathered as the ſheep of the flock, when the ſhepherds (the rulers in church and ſtate) that ſcattered them ſhould be reckoned with; *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I am againſt the ſhepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cauſe them to ceaſe from feeding the flock; neither ſhall the ſhepherds feed themſelves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I even I, will both ſearch my ſheep, and ſeek them out. As a ſhepherd ſeeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his ſheep that are ſcattered; ſo will I ſeek out my ſheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been ſcattered in the cloudy and dark day*, Ezek. xxxiv. 10,—12. Now, concerning theſe ſcattered Iſraelites you may obſerve theſe particulars.

1. From what *place* they were to be brought and gathered. We are told, the Lord ſhould *beat them off*; that is, as fruit from a tree, which is carefully gathered for the uſe of men; and he ſhould beat them off *from the channel of the river to the ſtream of Egypt*; that is, from the river Euphrates to the river Nilus, which were the two borders of the land of promiſe. ——All the Iſraelites left in the land are here oppoſed to theſe of them that are diſperſed into foreign parts, ſuch as Aſſyria and Egypt: he ſhall find out his ſcattered people, and ſeparate them from theſe with whom they ſeem to be incorporated; theſe that were driven to the land of Aſſyria, ready to periſh for want of neceſſaries, and ready to deſpair of deliverance: and theſe that were outcaſts in the land of Egypt, whither theſe that were left behind, after the captivity into Babylon, went, contrary to God's expreſs command, Jer. xliii. 6, 7. and there lived as outcaſts.

2. In what manner they were to be gathered; ver. 12. *Ye ſhall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Iſrael*; pointing out either the ſmalneſs of the remnant

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of that numerous people, or rather God's exact and singular care of them, that not one of them should be lost. As God had mercy in store for perishing outcasts, and will make it appear that, though they are cast out, they are not cast off; so he takes particular care of gathering them one by one; not in multitudes, but first one, as it were, and then another. This, indeed, is the way of God's gathering his elect remnant: for ordinary they are but few: *And of Zion it* is *said, This man and that man* is *born there.*

3. By what *means* they shall be gathered, *The great trumpet shall be blown;* that is, by the proclamation of liberty by king Cyrus to the captives, which awakened the Jews, that were asleep in their thraldom, to bestir themselves and return to Jerusalem and their own land; of which proclamation you read, 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 22, 23. Ezra i. 2, 3, 4. This was like the sounding of the jubilee-trumpet, which published the year of release; thus God was to summon them, as it were, by the sound of a trumpet from the remotest parts of the earth, by an eminent call or act of his providence in their behalf; and particularly from Assyria, where the ten tribes where carried captive; and from Egypt, where many of the Jews were.

4. For what *end* they should be gathered, namely, *To worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.* Though the holy temple was in ruins, yet they had the holy mount, the *place of the altar*, Gen. xiii. 4. Liberty to worship God in his instituted ordinances is a most valuable and desirable liberty.

2*dly*, As to the *typical* and *spiritual* meaning of these words. That they have a further view than what I have yet mentioned, will appear, if you consider, that as king Cyrus was an eminent type of our Lord Jesus Christ; so the deliverance of Israel from the Babylonish captivity and Egyptian thraldom, by his means, was eminently typical of the redemption to be wrought for sinners through Jesus Christ, from their spiritual bondage. To this purpose you may read, Isa. xliv. 28. and xlv. 1,—4. In all this Cyrus was a type of Christ, who

who was made victorious over principalities and powers, and intrusted with *unsearchable riches*, for the use and benefit of God's servants his elect When he ascended on high he led *captivity captive*, taking these captives who had taken others captive, and *opened the prison to them that were bound.*

Again, Cyrus' proclamation of liberty to the captive Israelites, which was here propheſied of, more than a hundred years before it came to pass, is compared to the *blowing of a great trumpet*, in allusion plainly to the silver trumpets which the priests were to use, Numb. x. 2. for assembling the Israelites: which signified how the ministers of Christ should *lift up their voice like a trumpet*, to shew *people their sins*, Isa. lviii. 1.; and to call them home to Christ out of their captive state. To the same purpose, Lev. xxiii. 23. we read of the *feast of trumpets*; a memorial of blowing of trumpets on the first day of the seventh month, the beginning of the year of jubilee. This was typical of the preaching of the gospel; and in allusion to this, they are said to be *blessed that hear the joyful sound*, Psal. lxxxix. 15; that are invited to come to Christ, and to wait upon God in his public instituted ordinances. Mount Zion also here mentioned being an eminent type of the gospel-church, this text is not only applicable to the preaching of the gosoel of Christ, for gathering sinners to him; but the typical and spiritual sense of it is a prophetical declaration and promise of the conversion of the nations to the faith of Christ, by the blowing of the silver trumpet of the everlasting gospel.

Here then in the words you have these four things represented to you.

1. The *sad* and *miserable* case of sinners by nature, they are *outcasts*, *ready to perish*, under their spiritual captivity to sin, and Satan, and the wrath of God.

2. The *relief* provided and proclaimed in their ears, by the great trumpet of the gospel, which proclaims the *acceptable year of the Lord*, the year of liberty to perishing captives; *The great trumpet shall be blown.*

3. The *power* and *efficacy* of this relief, thus proclaimed by sound of trumpet, for determining all the

choſen Iſrael of God, to betake themſelves to the city of refuge; *They ſhall come;* the goſpel of Chriſt ſhall be the power of God to their ſalvation: they ſhall come to Chriſt.

4. The *end* and *deſign* of their coming to Chriſt, namely, that they may *ſerve and worſhip the Lord in his holy mount*, and that they may have fellowſhip and communion with God in Chriſt; and, being accepted in the Beloved, may offer acceptable ſervice to him in his holy place.

Paſſing many doctrines that may be drawn from the words, I ſhall, as the Lord may aſſiſt, ſpeak to this only.

OBSERV. *That as it is the duty of periſhing ſinners, who hear the goſpel, to come to God in Chriſt as the only Saviour and glorious object of worſhip; ſo it is an encouraging promiſe, that when the great trumpet of the goſpel is blown, a number of outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip and ſerve him acceptably in his holy mount.*

I might, at conſiderable length, prove every branch of this doctrine.

1. That it is the *duty of periſhing ſinners to come to Chriſt the Saviour:* this is plain from all the calls of the goſpel: *Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*, Iſa. lv. 1. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Mat. xi. 28.

2. That they ought to come to him as *God the Saviour*, and *God the glorious object of worſhip*, by whom we are to worſhip God, and whom we are to worſhip as God; Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.* John v. 23. *All men muſt honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;* who therefore ſays, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.*

3. That it is the *great trumpet of the goſpel* that is the means for gathering ſinners to Chriſt, is plain, Rom. ix. 17.

xi. 17. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* For this end a gospel ministry is given, Eph. iv. 12; and therefore ministers are called to *preach the gospel to every creature*, Mark xvi. 15.

4. That a *number of sinners, ready to perish*, shall come at the blowing of this trumpet, and that it shall be powerful and effectual for bringing them, is also plain; for, Romans i. 16. the gospel is *the power of God to their salvation: for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. The election shall obtain. And as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe*, Rom. xi. 7. Acts xvii. 48. His *people shall be willing in the day of* his *power*, Psal. cx. 3.

5. That, being thus brought back to God in Christ, they *shall worship him acceptably in his holy mount*, is also plain from these and the like promises, Psal. xxii. 27. *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; for the kingdom is the Lords, and he is the governor among the nations.* Psal. lxxxvi. 9. *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.* They will *worship towards his holy temple*, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. Hence says David, Psal. li. 18, 19. *Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.* When he sends forth his *light* and *truth*, then he brings them to his *holy hill* and to his *tabernacle;* and then do they come to the *altar of God, to God their exceeding joy*, Psalm xlii. 3, 4.; then they shall worship a God in Christ acceptably and joyfully, Isa. lvi. 6, 7.

Thus you may see the doctrine plain in every branch of it; *That as it is the duty of perishing sinners, that hear the gospel, to come to God in Christ, as the only Saviour and glorious object of worship; so it is an encouraging promise, that when the great trumpet of the gospel is blown, a number of outcast sinners, ready to perish, shall come, and shall worship and serve him acceptably in his holy mount.*

The method wherein I would speak to it, as the Lord may assist, is the following.

I. To consider a little the *state* and *condition* of sinners by nature, as *outcasts, ready to perish.*

II. The *duty* of sinners to come to Christ as the Saviour, the great Lord-deliverer, and glorious object of worship.

III. Speak of the *means* by which the Lord gathers these sinners thus to him, namely, the *blowing of the great gospel trumpet.*

IV. Touch at the *efficacy* of these means, and shew why it is promised *they shall come.*

V. Speak of the *end* for which they shall come, their *worshipping* him in his holy mountain.

VI. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. We are to touch a little at the *sad state* and *circumstance of sinners by nature.* Now, there are two words here, by which, O sinner, your natural sad state is represented; 1. As *outcasts,* or sinners cast out. 2. As sinners *ready to perish.*

1. We are *outcasts,* as Israel in Egypt were designed: and this is the name several times given to sinners in scripture, in allusion to the outcast Israelites; Psal. cxlvii. 2. *The Lord shall build up Jerusalem, the Lord gathereth in the outcasts of Israel.* Isa. xi. 12. *He shall set up an ensign for the nations: he shall assemble the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the earth.* The Lord seems to glory in this name of *gathering outcasts;* for I find him again taking it to himself, Isa. lvi. 8. *The Lord which gathers the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet I will gather others to him, besides these that are gathered to him.* Now, if you enquire in what respect sinners are *outcasts,* (the consideration of this is necessary, in order to your coming to Christ, when the gospel-trumpet is blown in your ears; for, you will not prize the proclamation of mercy, if you do not see what a miserable outcast state you are in,) know then, O sinner, that

that by your ſin and fall in the firſt Adam, you are caſt out of God's *favour* and *fellowſhip*, being an *alien from the common-wealth of Iſrael, and a ſtranger to the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. Like the wretched infant, Ezek. xvi. 5. *caſt out into the open field, to the lothing of thy perſon in the day that thou waſt born; having no eye to pity, or have compaſſion upon thee.* O ſinners, you are ſuch outcaſts, that not only have you caſt out yourſelves, by ſin in Adam, and in your own perſon, by original and actual ſin, but you are caſt out by the juſtice of God, executing the law-ſentence againſt you. You are under the curſe of the law, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* You are not only under the ſentence of the law, the ſentence of condemnation, but the ſentence is partly executed; the ſentence is, *Thou ſhalt die, thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Geneſis ii. 17. And behold, thou art dead, thou art ſurely *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes.* The ſentence is paſſed on thee, thou art legally dead; the ſentence is executed in thee, thou art ſpiritually dead: Being legally dead, thou art condemned already; and, being ſpiritually dead, the ſentence of condemnation is partly executed already; and there is nothing but the ſmall hair of a mortal life between thee and the full execution of that ſentence in thy eternal death.—Thus you are caſt out of God's preſence, caſt out of his vineyard; not only ſet out, or gone out, but by virtue of the law-wrath you are under, caſt out like a dead dog caſt over the wall of a city; *For without are dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15.

In a word, O ſinner, you are caſt out to the *devil*, and led captive by him at his pleaſure. The devil hath poſſeſſion of you, he *works in the heart* of the *children of diſobedience.* The devil is your god; for he is *the god of this world, that blindeth your minds that believe not*, 2 Cor. iv. 4.

In theſe, and the like reſpects, you are outcaſts, caſt out of God's houſe, and caſt out to the devil; caſt

caſt out into the mire, and wallowing in the mire of ſin and luſts; poor, vile, and miſerable outcaſts.

2. You are *ready to periſh* in your outcaſt ſtate, on the very brink of periſhing for ever, if mercy interpoſe not; ready to die both the firſt and ſecond death. Ready to die the *firſt death;* for your life is but a ſpan, and the half of it is paſt already, and perhaps much more. Pray, where are your grandfather and grandmother? Yea, may we not ſay to ſome here, Where are your fathers and mothers? Is not their time paſt, and their acquaintance, whom you and your neighbours knew? Is it not juſt a dream to think on the days of old? Are they not all gone like a ſhadow, and the place where they were knows them no more? Like a bird that flies through the air, leaving no veſtige behind it; or like a ſhip that cuts out its way in the ſea, and immediately the water cloſes up behind it, and the place is not known through which it went. Is not your life periſhing in that ſame manner! And you cannot promiſe upon another year, nay, nor upon another month, nay, not upon another week, nay, not upon another day, nay, nor upon another hour, nay, not upon another minute, another moment.—You are ready to periſh in your outcaſt ſtate, ready to die; and if you die in it, then you die for ever.

You are ready to die the *ſecond death*, which you have deſcribed, Rev. xxi. 8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars; ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.* You have it deſcribed alſo, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. where it is ſaid, Chriſt *will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power;* or by his powerful and wrathful preſence, which they ſhall for ever have; and by being baniſhed from his gracious and glorious preſence which they ſhall for ever want; for as heaven is a *being for ever with the Lord;* ſo hell is a being for ever without him. The wicked may think it an

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eaſy puniſhment to be without God now, while they know not his infinite excellency; but beſide the puniſhment of ſenſe, and ſenſible pain for ever, the puniſhment of his loſs will be found to be dreadful. Hunger puts no poſitive torment or pain upon a man; yet his ſuffering, through hunger may be very great, when he can get nothing to eaſe it: now, the nature of perfection is ſuch that whatever rational creature apprehends it, cannot but deſire union with it, and be pained for the want of it. Now, if once God had unmaſked his infinite glory and excellency (for there is no atheiſt in hell) they will ſee what infinite excellencies they are deprived the enjoyment of.—— What unexpreſſible uneaſineſs and torment will it be, to be under a neceſſity of deſiring that happineſs which can never be granted! A man may be deeply in love with a mortal, a piece of clay which God hath painted amiable and lovely in his ſight, and that mortal perhaps ſlight his addreſſes, and he may ſuffer ſuch torment by his being ſlighted as may pine him away to death: and if one bit of clay deſired, and not granted, be ſo tormenting and uneaſy to bear, let none have ſlight and light thoughts of the pain of loſs that theſe will ſuſtain, who are ſecluded the preſence of the Lord, and his infinite beauty and excellency. Here then is the ſecond death; God's everlaſting wrathful preſence, and privation of his glorious preſence for ever.—Thus you are ready to periſh: O diſmal caſe! ready for hell, prepared for it, and ready every moment to be thrown into that place of perdition!

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, To ſpeak a little of the *duty* of outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh; and that is, to *come to Jeſus;* to come back to God, by this new and living way, that they periſh not in their outcaſt ſtate and miſerable condition. I ſhall here conſider a little what this coming *imports*, and in what *capacity* they are to come to him.

1. This coming to Chriſt, or to God in him, as it ſuppoſes that *natural*, *outcaſt*, *periſhing* ſtate and condition, which is a ſtate of diſtance from God; and a

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ſenſe or *conviction* of this diſtant and diſmal ſtate, ſeeing the firſt ſtep in God's way, is to ſee ourſelves intirely out of the way, and that the devil and our luſts are driving us to hell: ſo it ſuppoſes, indeed, a *drawing power of divine grace*, making the ſoul willing to be ſaved in a way of free grace, both from ſin and wrath, through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. It ſuppoſes one's hearing of the *way of relief* to be had in Jeſus Chriſt, and a *weighty errand* that brings the ſoul to Jeſus. Being ſenſible of blindneſs, he comes for light; being ſenſible of guilt, and under fear of wrath, he comes for juſtification and reconciliation with God; being ſenſible of the power of ſin, and hell of corruption within him, he comes for ſanctification and freedom from theſe maſſy chains of hell: being weak, they come for ſtrength; being weary, they come for reſt; being naked, they come for clothing; being deſtitute of all good, they come for ſupply of all in him, who is *all in all*. And hence,

More particularly, this coming imports a *knowledge* of the perſon to whom we come; for there is a *ſeeing of the Son* neceſſary to *believing in him*, John vi. 40. By the light of heaven the comer is made to ſee his abſolute need of Chriſt, and the glorious excellency and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt. A man's coming to any place, ſuppoſes his knowledge where he is going. It imports *ſpiritual life* and *motion*, without which none can come or go any where in a ſpiritual ſenſe; no more than there can be any coming in a natural ſenſe without natural life and motion. In the day of coming to Chriſt, the ſoul is quickened by the ſpirit of life, by the ſpirit of faith; aud quickened to a lively hope: for this coming imports a hope of coming ſpeed, at leaſt a *may-be* the merciful king of Iſrael will pity me. A poor man will not come for an alms to any perſon that he thinks hath nothing to give him; the believing comer is perſuaded there is fulneſs enough in Chriſt; fulneſs of virtue, in his blood; fulneſs of merit, in his death; fulneſs of power, in his arm.—And hereupon chiefly this coming imports a *reſolute outgoing of ſoul after Chriſt*, as offered in the goſpel; an actual cloſing with him, by a practical

practical assent of the understanding, a pleasant consent of the will, and a vigorous egress of the affection towards the Son of God. Seeing an absolute need, he ventures on an offered Christ for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.——But this leads to the next thing here to be considered, for I must not inlarge.

2. In what *capacity* we are to come. We are to come to him in a twofold capacity. 1. It is to him as the *Lord Redeemer*. 2. As the LORD, the glorious object of worship; *They shall come and worship.*

(1.) It is to Christ as the *Lord* and *Saviour, Redeemer* and *Deliverer*. Christ stands as a Saviour upon mount Zion, inviting all sorts of sinners to come to him; old sinners, young sinners, great sinners, gross sinners, the vilest and blackest outcasts, to come and get salvation; for it is his name to save; it is his nature, his delight, his office to save. We are to come as captives to a Redeemer, ready to deliver those who are ready to perish in their captivity to sin, Satan, justice, death, and hell; and hence his voice is, *Turn to your strong hold, ye prisoners of hope:* come to me outcast sinners, ready to perish; here am I ready to save.

(2.) It is to Christ as the LORD JEHOVAH, the glorious object of worship. This, I think, is also imported in the words, *They shall come and shall worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem.* Before men come to Jesus Christ, from their spiritual captivity, they are worshipping and serving the devil and their lusts; but, whenever they come to Jesus, they both worship him, and worship God in him: *He is thy Lord, worship thou him*, Psal. xlv. 11. *When they saw him, they worshipped him*, Mat. xxviii. 17. And then, and not till then, do they worship God acceptably, when they worship God in the Spirit, and by the Spirit of Christ; and worship the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit: for the Spirit is the way to Christ, *He shall testify of me;* and Christ the way to the Father, *No man cometh to the Father but by me.* Faith, in coming to Christ, takes him up both as God, the great JEHOVAH, the glo-

rious object of worſhip; and as the CHRIST of God, the way to God: becauſe he is both God and man; IMMANUEL, *God with us.* Thus he is both the end and the way; and ſo both the glorious object of worſhip, and the perſon in whom our worſhip is acceptable: *They ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mount.*— But of this more afterward.

III. The third thing propoſed was, To ſpeak of the *means* by which the Lord gathers outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, and makes them come to him and worſhip him, namely, by the *blowing of the great* GOSPEL-TRUMPET: *The great trrmpet ſhall be blown, and they ſhall come.* This as I have already ſhewed, is the preaching of the goſpel of Chriſt, and the proclamation of the grace of God therein to poor outcaſt periſhing ſinners.

That I may ſpeak a little of this the more diſtinctly, I ſhall ſhew, 1. Why, the preaching of the goſpel is compared to the *ſounding* or *blowing of a trumpet.* 2. Why it may be called a great *trumpet.* 3. What ſort of a *ſound* this great trumpet makes; or what the meaning of it is, as to the *contents* of the proclamation made by it. 4. The *quality* of the ſound when blown.

1*ſt*, Why the preaching of the goſpel is compared to the *blowing of a trumpet.* I deſign not to ſtretch the metaphor beyond the deſign of the thing: I ſhall only mention theſe two or three particulars.

1. A trumpet is a *royal* and *majeſtic* ſort of an inſtrument, and hence uſually kings of the earth are crowned and proclaimed by their heralds with ſound of trumpe: ſo the goſpel is the royal and majeſtic trumpet of the great King of kings, and therein he diſcovers his glory and majeſty, when he rides proſperouſly on the word of truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs, Pſal. xlv. 3, 4. Therein is Chriſt proclaimed king of Zion, and the royalties of his grace publiſhed.

2. A trumpet is a *high* and *loud ſounding* inſtrument, and the ſound of it heard at a conſiderable diſtance. Such a trumpet is the goſpel; and therefore it is ſaid

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of the heralds of the great King, that preached the gospel, *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world*, Rom. x. 18. It is the loud voice of the Son of God by his ambassadors: and it is to be heard through all the earth before the end of time: *The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*, Mat. xxiv. 14.

3. A trumpet is a *martial, warlike* instrument, and usually blown to proclaim peace or war: and thus the gospel is a proclamation of peace with God, and war with the devil. The first sound that ever this trumpet made was a sound of peace and war both: war with the devil, the destroyer of mankind; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*; and peace on earth, upon this ground, because the *God of peace* was, in this way, *to bruise Satan under our feet*. The gospel is the great instrument, many ways useful in directing in the holy war.—Sometimes it is to sound a *gathering*, a *gathering of the people to Shiloh*: the rendezvous under the standard of the Captain of salvation, calling all to come to him, and inlist with him.—Sometimes to blow an *alarm*; *When ye blow an alarm, the camp shall go forward, and take their journey*, Numb. x. 5, 6.—Sometimes to sound a *march*, to go forward to the battle against the enemy, in his name and strength, of whom it is said, Psal. lxviii. 7, 11, 12. *He went forth before the people; he marched through the wilderness. The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it: kings of great armies did fly apace*. It never sounds a retreat, nor a fist from war, except in so far as he himself sees fit to spare his enemies alive for necessary uses towards his people, saying, *Slay them not, lest my people forget*. But when they *fight the good fight of faith*, and fight lawfully and successfully, the trumpet sounds the victory and the triumph; *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. *We are more than conquerors, thro' him that loved us*, Rom. viii. 37. *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* 2 Cor. xv. 55. *To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me*

on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with the Father on his throne, Rev. iii. 21.

4. The blowing of a trumpet requires *life*, *breath*, and *wisdom* also: even so, in order to the blowing of the gospel-trumpet, the spirit of life is necessary, and the breathing of the spirit of life. They who are not quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and do not enjoy the breathing of the Spirit of Christ, cannot blow the gospel-trumpet to any good purpose, at least, they are not God's ordinary instruments of quickening others: but, *who is sufficient for these things? Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. The gospel-trumpet will do little service, if the Spirit of God be not the breath that blows it. A great trumpet requires great breath; and therefore, O Sirs, look to heaven for the great breathing of the Spirit to accompany the gospel. Yea, the blowing of the trumpet requires wisdom and skill; one may have both life and breath, and yet want skill to blow a trumpet: even so, much spiritual wisdom is requisite in blowing the gospel-trumpet, that we *handle not the word of God deceitfully*: that we blow not a false alarm, or a false peace; that we give not an *uncertain sound*; for, as the apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 8. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?* If it be not precious truth, and pure gospel that is preached, we are not to regard it, though the trumpet were blown by the mouth of an angel; *If we or an angel from heaven preach another gospel, let him be accursed*, Gal. i. 6.

2*dly*, I am here to enquire, why the gospel may be called a *great trumpet*. This I shall dispatch in a few words.

1. It is a great trumpet, because it is the trumpet of the *great God*, and of the great King, the great Saviour; for so our Lord Jesus is called, Isa. xix. 20. *They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors; and*

and he shall send them a Saviour and a great One, and he shall deliver them. O how great is this man, this God-man! How great in his *person*, being the *brightness of the Father's glory*, and *the express image of his person; the Prince of the kings of the earth;* great in his *offices:* a great Prophet, a great High-priest, a great King: great in his *relations*, great in his *names;* great in his *promises;* great in his *purchase;* great in his *victories;* great in his *fulness;* having all the *fulness of the Godhead in him.*——It is the trumpet of the great King.

2. It is the trumpet of a *great salvation:* Hebrews ii. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation,* published by the gospel-trumpet? The great Saviour comes with a commission under the great seal of heaven; *For him hath God the Father sealed.* And he comes upon a great design, the salvation of great sinners, in such a way as the ultimate end thereof is the glory of God's great perfections, and the praise of his grace. It is salvation from the greatest moral evil, namely, sin; and salvation from the greatest penal evil, *from the wrath to come,* that is proclaimed by this trumpet.

3. It is a great trumpet, in opposition to all other *earthly* trumpets, that are but little emblems of this great one. What are the trumpets of earthly kings and conquerors, when laid in the balance with the gospel-trumpet, sounding the triumph of our glorious Conqueror, and saying, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save?* Isa. lxiii. 1.

4. It is a great trumpet, in respect of the *great consequence* of the sounding and blowing of it; for, as the gospel is called the *everlasting gospel;* so *everlasting life,* or *everlasting death* will be the consequence of your hearing thereof: *To some we are the savour of death unto death, and to others the savour of life unto life,* 2 Cor. ii. 16. Not that the gospel brings a sound of death and damnation to any of itself; no, by no means, it is a word of salvation to sinners; but when this joy-

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ful ſound is ſlighted by final unbelief and impenitency, then it brings the greateſt ruin and perdition. See and read to this purpoſe, Heb. x. 28, 29. and xii. 25. To ſlight the ſound of this great trumpet, then, brings the greateſt damnation, the hotteſt hell; but in itſelf it is a merciful ſound. Therefore,

3*dly*, I am here to conſider what ſort of a *ſound* this great trumpet brings, and what ſort of a *proclamation* is made by it. In general, When this great trumpet is blown, it gives a ſound of *grace* and *mercy* to poor outcaſt ſinners ready to periſh. It is called, Titus ii. 11. *The grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation to all men*, as you may read in the margin. More particularly,

1. The ſound of this great trumpet is a ſound of *life* to dead ſinners; John x. 10. *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* John v. 25. *The hour cometh, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear ſhall live.* John xi. 25. *I am the reſurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live.* This trumpet is for rouzing and awakening the dead; and bleſſed are they that are awakened and quickened with the ſound of it; for the voice of it is, *Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*, Eph. v. 4. No trumpet but that of the living and life-giving God can ſound after this manner: and it is like himſelf; for he is the *God that quickens the dead, and calls things that be not, as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17.

2. The ſound of this great trumpet is a ſound of *liberty to captive* ſinners; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn*, Iſa. lxi. 1, 2. O captive ſinner, lying in the chains of ſin and Satan, and in the chains of unbelief and enmity, would you have your chains looſed, and your ſoul ſet at liberty? Hear

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the voice of the trumpet; *The Lord looſeth the priſoners*, Pſal. cxlvi. 7. *Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope*, Zech. ix. 12. *By the blood of thy covenant have I ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit wherein is no water*, ver. 11.

3. The ſound of this great trumpet is a ſound of *pardoning grace* to the *condemned* ſinner; it proclaims indemnity to all the guilty rebels againſt heaven that hear and welcome the ſound of it; *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſin. And by him all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes*, Acts xiii. 38, 39. It is free indemnity through Chriſt, to the praiſe of his glorious grace, that is proclaimed; *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace*, Eph. i. 7. O! will any condemned ſinner accept of pardon and indemnity upon theſe gracious terms? The condition is already fulfilled; the blood of Jeſus Chriſt hath bought remiſſion. This bleſſing of his blood comes therefore to you freely, that you may accept of it freely, and you have it. *Not for your ſake, not for your ſake doth he give it, but for his own name's ſake;* Iſa. xliii. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out your tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake;* for no other reaſon but that you may have the good of it, and I may have the glory of it.

4. The ſound of this great trumpet is a ſound of *purifying grace* to the *filthy* ſinner; *In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*, Zech. xiii. 1. The trumpet proclaims to you, O filthy, polluted ſinner, going quick with vermine, all overſpread with the ugly vermine of ſin and corruption: it proclaims, ſaying, Behold, the God of heaven, hath provided a fountain of purification, both for ſin, and for uncleanneſs; both for taking away the guilt of ſin, and the filth of ſin: yea, behold, he hath provided both a Red-ſea, and a cryſtal river; a

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Red-sea of blood, *The blood of Christ cleansing from all sin*, 1 John i. 7.; and the crystal river that *proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*: and this is to be in you as a *well of water springing up to everlasting life*, in his quickening, purifying, and sanctifying presence and operation, John iv. 14. You cannot sanctify and purify yourself, no more than you can create a world; but here am I that can create a clean heart within you; *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world*; therefore, *take with you words, nd say, Take away all iniquity*, thou whose work it is, and whose promise thus sounds in mine ears, *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This great trumpet then, hath a sound of life and liberty, pardon and purity; life to the dead, liberty to the bound, pardon to the guilty, and purity to the filthy. These comprehend all that you need, both in time and for eternity; for the everlasting gospel proclaims everlasting blessings, everlasting life, everlasting liberty, everlasting pardon, everlasting purity and holiness; all to be had in Christ, the everlasting Lord and Saviour, *who was dead, and is alive, and lives for evermore*; and all to be had, partly and graciously here; and fully, and gloriously hereafter.

5. In a word, the sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *complete salvation*, in all the respects wherein poor sinners that hear the joyful sound need to be saved. It is a sound of instruction to the ignorant, saying, *They shall be all taught of God*. A sound of direction to the bewildered, saying, like a voice behind them, *This is the way, walk ye in it*. The trumpet proclaims, saying, Here is rest, for the weary soul; comfort, for the drooping soul; strength, for the weak; riches, for the poor; raiment, for the naked; sight, for the blind; supply, for the needy soul; here is salvation for the lost soul, grace, glory, and every good thing for these that have nothing. Here, in short then, is the matter of the proclamation by sound of trumpet from heaven. You have a sum of the joyful sound of this

this trumpet, Isa xxv. 6. *In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.* Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* Ho, every one that pleaseth, come and match with the Son of God: *All things are ready, come to the marriage*, and so come to the marriage-feast.——So much shall suffice for this particular.

4*thly*, I proposed here to speak a little of the *quality* of this sound of the great gospel-trumpet, when it is blown in Zion. And,

1. It is a *joyful* and a *charming* sound, Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day long: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* The voice of the trumpet is, *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people: For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, Luke ii. 10. Some that were once delivered by a conqueror, from outward bondage, made the elements ring, and the birds fall out of the air with their voice, crying out, SOTER, SOTER, *a Saviour, a Saviour.* O how much more should the glad news of a Saviour, to save from sin and everlasting wrath, be received with joy! It is a joyful and charming sound; shall the voice of the Charmer be rejected and despised by the deaf adders here?

2. It is a *divine, awful* sound; it is the voice of the Son of man; yea, the voice of the Son of God: it is the voice of the great God that is to be heard thro' this trumpet, that *voice that shakes the heaven and the earth*, Heb. xii. 26.—It is a *lofty* sound, from the *high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity*: a *majestic* sound; for, *The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.* Though it be a still small voice, like that Elijah heard, 1 Kings xix. 12.; yet, *the Lord is in it*: and happy they that, through the voice of a man, hear the voice of God,

by *receiving it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in you that believe*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Hence,

3. It is an *internal* and *ſpiritual*, as well as an *external* ſound; *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the fleſh profiteth nothing; the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life*, John vi. 63. Hence it is a ſound that both wounds and heals the ſoul: that firſt kills, and then quickens the ſoul: and ſo it appears to be the voice of the living God, who ſays, *I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal.* It is *external*, in the publication to the ear; and *faith comes by this hearing*; and then it is *internal* and *ſpiritual*, in the operation of it upon the heart: and, O may it be a living and life-giving, and ſoul-quickening ſound to many here; for, it is the *voice of the Son of God*, that makes the *dead to hear and live*.

4. It is a *long* and *laſting* ſound. The ſound of common trumpets, when they are blown, is but a dying ſound; but the great trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel is not ſo: it is *the word of God that lives and abides for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. The echo of this joyful ſound will be heard for ever, both in heaven and in hell. The joyful echo among the redeemed, and the dreadful tormenting echo among the damned, will be everlaſting: it will not ſound for ever as now it doth; but the echo thereof will be heard louder and louder to all eternity, when all things elſe will wither and fade: this you ſee clear from 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. compared with Iſa. xl. 6. *The voice ſaid, Cry. And I ſaid, What ſhall I cry? All fleſh is graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of the graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.* And as to the preſent external diſpenſation of the goſpel, God keeps the count of the time how long the trumpet ſounds in your ears; *All day long have I ſtretched out my hand to a diſobedient and gainſaying people*, Rom. x. 21.

5. It is a *near* ſound, not at a diſtance, like news from a foreign country, but near at hand, and bring-

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ing heavenly things near to us; *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs; I bring near my righteouſneſs; it ſhall not be far off; and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry.* He *placeth* this *ſalvation in Zion, for Iſrael his glory,* Iſa. xl. 12,—13. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach,* Rom. x. 8. The word is nigh to your heart: for the Lord is dealing with your heart by it: O may he not only deal, but prevail. For,

6. It is a *powerful, conquering* ſound: it will overcome and prevail, ſo as to reach the end of it one way or another: *It ſhall not return unto me void; but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it,* Iſaiah lv. 11. God will not blow his trumpet in vain; all rejecters and deſpiſers ſhall be rendered inexcuſeable by it; and all his elect ſhall be mercifully conquered; for the trumpet hath a ſurmounting ſound; it ſounds over the tops of all the hills and mountains of ſin and guilt, and of unbelief and enmity; *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, and ſkipping upon the hills,* Song ii. 8. The voice of the Lord is powerful, melting down mountains in his way. *The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.* This leads,

IV. To the *fourth* general head propoſed, To touch at the *efficacy* of this means; and why it is promiſed, that a number of *outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh,* by the blowing of the great trumpet, *ſhall come.* Arminian doctrine, that aboundeth in our day, makes the efficacy of the goſpel depend upon man's free-will: but, *we have not ſo learned Chriſt:* he hath made ſurer work; and all the efficacy to depend upon his free grace: and this is ſecured by his *ſhall be: The great trumpet* SHALL BE *blown, and they* SHALL *come.* The Father's promiſe to the Son ſecures it; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power,* Pſal. cx. 3. *He ſhall ſee his ſeed. He ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied.* The Father's promiſe to the Son is ſecured and confirmed by his oath upon this head, Pſal. lxxxix.

35. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lye unto David. His ſeed ſhall endure for ever;* his ſeed among Jews and Gentiles, and among the nations afar off; *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmoſt ends of the earth for thy poſſeſſion. He ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and the iſles ſhall wait for his law.* Amidſt all the diſcouragements that men may give us in our preaching the goſpel, here is the encouragement that God gives us in blowing the great trumpet in the ears of *outcaſts, ready to periſh.* There is a number among them that ſhall come; *Other ſheep I have, that are not of this fold; them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice,* John x. 16. I *muſt* bring them, and they *muſt* come. The ſweet neceſſity he is under of bringing them, produces in the day of power, a ſweet neceſſity in them, ſaying, O we muſt come to Chriſt; we periſh without him: we hear the ſound of his trumpet; and therefore we ſay, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

QUEST. *Why is it promiſed, that a number of outcaſts, ready to periſh ſhall come, when the goſpel-trumpet ſhall be blown?*

ANSW. 1. Becauſe none would have *encouragement* to come, if there were not a promiſe that *they ſhall come.* Here is encouragement to all that hear the ſound of this trumpet. It is true, may a ſoul ſay, I know not if I be intended, but I ſee the promiſe reſpects the like of me: the promiſe of *drawing grace,* reſpects the like of me, that cannot come of myſelf; the promiſe of *pardon* reſpects theſe that are *guilty;* the promiſe of *cleanſing,* reſpects theſe that are *filthy;* the promiſe of *taking away the ſtony heart,* reſpects theſe that have a *hard, ſtupid heart.* Now, this is my caſe; and therefore, here is a door of hope; here is ſome encouragement for me to come to him, and wait upon him.—And as none would have encouragement if it were not ſo: ſo all may have encouragement here: the door of hope is open.

2. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come,* becauſe as none would have encouragement to come, ſo none would have

have *grace* to come, if it were not promiſed; and if it were not by virtue of the promiſe made in Jeſus Chriſt, for, it is grace coming out of the promiſe, that is turned to grace in the heart. Then, indeed, the ſoul comes when the grace that lies in the promiſe is turned to grace in the heart, and wrought there by the means of the promiſe. It is by virtue of the *great and precious promiſe* we are made *partakers of the divine nature*, and of the Spirit of faith; the promiſes being pleas and arguments for faith, and for the prayer of faith, ſaying, Lord, haſt thou not ſo and ſo ſaid to ſuch as I am; and will thou not *do as thou haſt ſaid*: Haſt thou not ſaid, That *Solomon ſhall reign*, that grace ſhall reign? and wilt thou ſuffer ſin to reign? And the promiſe being the pipe and channel for the communication of grace, the conduit from Chriſt to us, *All the promiſes* being *Yea and Amen in Chriſt*, and the conduit-pipe reaching from the heart of Chriſt to the mouth of faith, we ſuck in his fulneſs. As the law begets terror, ſo the promiſe begets faith; both by the *freeneſs* of it to the moſt unworthy, and the *fulneſs* of it, being a plaiſter as big as the ſore, and exactly anſwering to its want; and by the *efficacy* of it, through the ſecret working of the Spirit, diſcovering this fulneſs and freeneſs of divine grace, and drawing the heart towards this promiſing God.

3. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come*, that thus he may ſecure his own glory, which he deſigns to ſhew forth in his way. His great deſign, in ſaving any poor periſhing ſinner, is the glory of his name, and the honour of all his perfections: *Sing, O heavens; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael*, Iſa. xliv. 23. He deſigns, by redeeming them, to glorify himſelf; and that he may ſhew forth his perfections, and they may ſhew forth his praiſe; *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*, Iſa. xlii. 21. He thus ſhews forth the glory of his wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, mercy, and truth; and therefore he hath promiſed *they ſhall come*: and this, with all the other promiſes of God, are *Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20.

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4. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come* by faith to him, that their *ſalvation* may be ſure; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed*, Rom. iv. 16. As God's word, *Let it be*, brought the world into a being; ſo his *ſhall be*, is the cauſe of what comes to paſs in the new creation. His ſaying, *They ſhall come*, is the cauſe of their coming, otherwiſe they would never come. He hath declared his will in this world, concerning their coming to him for life and ſalvation; and *by his will they are ſanctified*, and ſaved *through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all*, Heb. x. 10. And what can be ſurer than the will of God, and that God will have his will? *He worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*, Eph. i. 11.

V. The *fifth* head I propoſed was, To ſpeak a little of the *end* for which they ſhall come, namely, *To worſhip the Lord in the holy mount at Jeruſalem*. To ſpeak now of divine worſhip at any length, is what I cannot propoſe; there are only four things concerning it, that, I think, the words here lead me to, namely, here is the *nature*, the *object*, the *manner*, and the *ſpring* of worſhip.

1. The *nature* of it, imported in the name *worſhip*. "To worſhip, is to give any one the honour due unto "him; ſo to worſhip God, is to render that honour "and homage that is due to him, Pſal. xxix. 2." Now, the worſhip of God is twofold, internal and external.—*Internal* worſhip, is to love God, to fear him, to believe and truſt in him; theſe are acts of inward worſhip, and the ſum of that honour we are required to give to God in the firſt command.—*External* worſhip, is the ſerving of God according to his own ordinances and inſtitutions, which is the ſum of the ſecond command, comprehending all the ſeveral ways wherein he will be honoured and ſerved, ſuch as, prayer, praiſe, *&c.* Both theſe muſt go together: *internal* worſhip, pleaſeth God beſt: *external* worſhip, honoureth him moſt, and ſetteth forth his glory in the world. Hence the temple was called, *The place where God put his*

his name, *i. e.* his *worſhip ;* by which God is known, as a man is by his name. *They that worſhip God, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in truth :* in *Spirit*, that is, with inward love, fear, reverence, and uprightneſs ; in *truth*, that is, according to the true rule of his word. The former reſpects the inward power, and the latter the outward rule ; the former ſtrikes at hypocriſy, and the latter at idolatry ; the one oppoſes looſeneſs of our hearts in worſhip, and the other oppoſes the inventions of our heads.

2. The *object* of worſhip is the LORD ; *They ſhall worſhip the Lord*, Hence we read, Matth. iv. 18. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* To me it would ſeem, that by the *Lord* here, in the text, we are to underſtand the *Lord* and *Saviour* CHRIST, becauſe I ſee no difference made between the object of *faith* here expreſſed by *coming*, and the object of *homage* here expreſſed by *worſhip ; They ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip the Lord.* However this be, it is God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, that is the object of religious worſhip ; and the Unity muſt be worſhipped in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity : and, when we direct our worſhip to any one perſon, we muſt include the reſt in the ſame worſhip ; and we are to conceive of him as he hath manifeſted himſelf to us in his word. If we worſhip God out of a Trinity, as the Turks ; or God out of Chriſt, as the Jews ; we worſhip not the true God, but an idol.

3. The *manner* of worſhip, and the *acceptable way* thereof, is here pointed out : *They ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mount at Jeruſalem ;* that is, to *worſhip him in the beauty of holineſs*, Pſal. xxix. 2. *i. e. In his holy temple*, or, *in his beautiful ſanctuary :* in a way honourable to him, which can only be in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

Now, for the further underſtanding of this, you would conſider, that Jeruſalem of old was the place of worſhip, *Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord to the teſtimony of Iſrael*, Pſal. cxxii. 3, 4. But now, under the New-teſtament diſpenſation, ſuch is the great goodneſs of God to us, he doth not now

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tye us to any place. See and read, John iv. 20, 21. He doth not tye us to go to the farther part of the nation to worſhip: no; the land is every where holy: wherever his *name is recorded*, there is a Jeruſalem, there is a Zion.

Again, conſider, that the *holy mount* at Jeruſalem, mount Zion largely taken, including mount Moriah, was the place of the temple, which was eminently typical of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And as all the true worſhippers of God then were to worſhip at or toward the material temple (hence the expreſſion of *worſhipping at his holy hill*, Pſal. xcix. 9.; and *worſhipping towards his holy temple*, Pſal. v. 7. *In thy fear will I worſhip toward thy holy temple:* and thus, Pſ. cxxxviii. 2.); ſo, to worſhip the Lord now, in the holy mount, is to worſhip God in Chriſt. And as to *aſcend into the hill of the Lord*, and to *ſtand in his holy place*, Pſal. xxiv. 3. thus to worſhip God in the holy mount at Jeruſalem, is, in the language of the New-teſtament, to *worſhip God in Chriſt:* in the Spirit of Chriſt, for aſſiſtance; and in the faith of the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for acceptance; for, *We are accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. It is an *entrance with boldneſs into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus*, Heb. x. 19. It is to have acceſs to God in our prayers and praiſes, and in the ordinances of the word and ſacrament of his own appointment and inſtitution; and *acceſs with boldneſs and confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. This is the ſame with that of David, *Bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle: then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy*, Pſal. xliii. 3, 4.

4. Here alſo is the *root* and *ſpring*, or the cauſe of this worſhip, implied in theſe words, *They ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip:* importing, that faith is the internal principle that leads on the ſoul to religious duties and worſhip; for firſt *they ſhall come*, namely, by faith; and then *they ſhall worſhip. Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, and to worſhip him acceptably. And importing alſo, that the power of the Spirit is the internal efficient cauſe of ſpiritual worſhip, ſtirring up and

and exciting the soul to it: for here is a double promise; first, *They shall come;* and then, *They shall worship;* which says, that not only, must the Spirit give us faith to come, but also grace to worship when we have come. One may be a believer in Christ that hath come to him, and yet out of case to worship the Lord in his holy mount, till the Spirit by his new breathing and influence raise up the dormant seed of grace; and, by his *blowing upon our garden, make the spices thereof flow out.* The same power that is first put forth in the mighty sound of the great gospel-trumpet, by virtue of that promise, *They shall come*, is necessary also to be put forth by virtue of that promise, *They shall worship.* Our coming to Christ believingly this day needs a powerful *shall be*, for that, *They shall come;* our communicating worthily to-morrow needs another powerful *shall be*, for that, *They shall worship.*— So much for this head, *They shall worship in his holy mount at Jerusalem.* I come now,

VI. To the *sixth* and last thing proposed, which was, To draw some *inferences* for the *application.*—— And,

1*st*, By way of *information.* If it be so, as has been said, hence,

1. We may see the *infinite mercy* of God toward poor perishing sinners, especially these within the pale of the visible church. Though they be *outcasts*, by casting out themselves; yet he sends the great trumpet of the gospel to call them in. They are *ready to perish*, in their sin and misery; and behold, he here shews himself ready to pity, and ready to save them, saying, *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. Incline your ear unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.*

2. Hence we may see what is the *work of ministers*, whom the Lord sends forth, namely, to *blow the trumpet in Zion*, Joel ii. 1. There is a twofold trumpet they are to blow; the trumpet of the *law*, and the trumpet of the *gospel.*

(1.) Sometimes they are called to put the terrible trumpet of the *law* to their mouth, *to tell Jacob their ſins, and Iſrael their tranſgreſſions;* to *cry aloud, and not ſpare*, Iſa. lviii. 1. They are to ſpare no pains, nor to ſpare their breath in blowing from Sinai, to ſhew ſinners both their ſinful and miſerable ſtate, and how they are upon the very brink of ruin, and ready to periſh. But then ſtill they are to preach the law with a view to the goſpel, and as a *ſchoolmaſter to lead them to Chriſt.*

(2) Again, they are called to blow the great *goſpel-trumpet* to theſe periſhing ſinners, proclaiming life, liberty, and ſalvation to them in a way of coming to Jeſus, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, that the curſe of the law may be put to an end with reſpect to them; not that from henceforth they may be lawleſs, but that they may be conform to the law, as a rule; for, in coming to him, they come to *worſhip the Lord in his holy mount.* Thus, indeed, the true goſpel-miniſter preaches always Chriſt, whether it be the law or the goſpel that is in his mouth: and he brings in more honour to the law than all the legal preachers in the world with their moral harangues, and high encomiums upon moral virtue: for the goſpel-miniſter preaches the law and its curſe, to bring the ſoul to Chriſt, in whom the law gets full ſatisfaction and complete payment, as it is, a covenant of works; and the ſinner coming to him gets redemption from all the curſes of it: and then he preaches the goſpel of the grace of God in Chriſt, ſo as the ſinner, being come to Chriſt, may come to his duty of right worſhip toward God, according to the direction of the law as a rule. He ſhews their periſhing ſtate, that they may come to Chriſt, and he calls them to come to Chriſt, that they may come to God in him, and worſhip the Lord in his holy mount.

Great ſkill then is requiſite in blowing this great trumpet. It is true, ſome are qualified of the Lord for blowing more loud and awfully, like BOANERGES, as *ſons of thunder:* others for blowing more ſoftly and ſweetly, like BARNABAS, as *ſons of conſolation;* and, indeed,

indeed, *There are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 4. Some are qualified and ſet apart for one piece of the tabernacle-work, and ſome for another: ſome to be founders, and ſome to be, as it were, barrow-men in the work of the ſpiritual temple: ſome for this poſt and ſtation, and ſome for the other. Let the great God be reverenced in all this; for it is he that qualifies and ſeparates every one for his own proper work. If he call one and the ſame perſon, at different times, to different work; or, if he call out one to go forth and *blow an alarm*, with a terrible ſound, and another to trumpet forth grace, and make the *people know the joyful ſound*; there is need for each of them: let infinite wiſdom be adored.

3. Hence we may ſee the *duty of people*, with reference to the *miniſters* and their *meſſage*, when blowing a great goſpel-trumpet; it is ſurely peoples duty, both to *pray* for them, and to *receive* their meſſage, by *hearkening to the ſound of the trumpet*.

On the one hand, it is their duty to *pray for poor miniſters*, that they may blow the great trumpet with the breath of the Spirit; and preach the goſpel in the *demonſtration of the Spirit, and with power*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. *Brethren, pray for us*, ſays the apoſtle; pray that a *door of utterance may be opened*. Never was there a time wherein God's people had more need to pray for miniſters: it is a day wherein it is much for them to hold their feet. There are grievous defections among the moſt part in Scotland, and theſe breaking out in judicatories, which we ſhould lament over, and give our teſtimony againſt, as ſometimes we eſſay to do: yea, there are ſinful defects in teſtifying among theſe that deſire to do ſo; and yet ſin in not doing ſo much as they ought. But I ſay again, miniſters had much need to be prayed for: and I have a word to ſay to you upon this head, not to offend you, but to deal plainly with you in the ſight of the great God, whoſe trumpet I am honoured to put in my mouth. I ſee ſome offence is taken at ſome worthy miniſters, whom you and I both, perhaps, reckon ſo; I mean, theſe that, upon the main, are known, to be faithful, ſo far as their

light and ability goes, and that have the seal of their ministry upon many souls, and whose ministry the Lord is still owning and blessing; when these do any thing that is amiss in your eyes, whether it be seemingly or really, I ask you, Whether you be more taken up in judging them or in praying for them? As to *rash* judgment, there is nothing you are more cautioned against in God's word: and as to *praying* for ministers particularly, there is nothing more expressly commanded. Now, I ask you again, before God and conscience, Whether you are more taken up in judging them, or in praying for them? I shall suppose they are really left to some wrong step; but, if you have been neglecting to pray for them, perhaps that is the cause why God hath left them, and thereupon you turn your back upon them also and revile them; and so the poor men suffer both the rebukes of God, and the reproaches of men, for your sin in neglecting to pray for them: and, therefore, hereupon I ask you again, Whether or not, before ever you be offended with them before the world, you are first displeased with yourself before God, and humble yourself before him, for your sinful neglect in praying and wrestling with God for them? If this be not your way, but, on the contrary, you be rashly disobliged at the poor honest ministers for the evil which your sin hath brought upon them; then I must tell you, in God's name, though you were as the signet of his right-hand, God will take his own time and way of restoring them, and rebuking you.

But again, as it is your duty to *pray* for ministers, so also to *receive their message*, and hearken to the sound of the trumpet in their mouth; and, indeed, if it be God's great trumpet that they blow, then surely not to listen to it, is to *stop your ears at the voice of the charmer*, like the deaf adder, and to *refuse him that speaketh from heaven*, which is a sin; how deep it runs, you may see, Heb. xii. 25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*

4. Hence

4. Hence we may see, from this doctrine, what it is that makes the preaching of the gospel *effectual* to the salvation of perishing sinners, when the great gospel-trumpet is blown. It is not any virtue of this or that preacher; no; it is the *power of God* exerted according to the promise, that then *they shall come* and *they shall worship*. What is it that will make the dead sinner to believe savingly? It is the efficacy of this word, *They shall come*. What is it that will make the believer a worthy receiver at the Lord's table? It is the efficacy of this word, *They shall worship the Lord in his holy mount*. It is a day of power that is here promised to accompany the blowing of the great trumpet, which he makes the *rod of his strength*, and sends it *out of Zion*. The gospel is the *ministration of the Spirit*, which is received by the *hearing of faith*.— This leads me to the next use we intend from the doctrine.

The *second* use, we make is for *examination*. You may try both your state and frame from this doctrine, in these following particulars, whether or not you be of these who, by the blowing of the great trumpet, have been made to *come* to Christ, and to *worship the Lord in his holy mount*. Examine by these two particulars, 1. If you have been made to *hear* the voice of God in the great trumpet of the gospel. 2. If thereupon you have been made to *live*, so as to come and worship. These two are the sum of God's saving work comprehending all; *The hour cometh, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*, John v. 25.

1. Have you *heard* the voice of God in this great gospel-trumpet? I ask not if you have heard this or that *man* speaking to you; but if you have heard *God* speaking by the word to you, and heard it, *not as the word of man, but as the word of God*. More particularly, have you heard,

(1.) So as to be *convinced* of your Egyptian thraldom and Assyrian bondage; and found yourself to be an outcast wretch, a sinner ready to perish, whereas before

before you was sleeping in your chains? Hath God's trumpet alarmed you, so as you have seen yourself lying under the curse of the law, and putting you in fear of everlasting wrath and damnation, as one lying on the very brink of hell, and made you to cry, Oh! *What shall I do to be saved?*

(2.) Have you heard so as to be *awakened*, as it were, from among the dead, to see that life and salvation is to be had in the glorious IMMANUEL, Jesus Christ, who is proclaimed a Saviour and Redeemer by the sound of the gospel-trumpet? There is a *seeing of the Son*, by a spiritual discerning, before there can be a *believing on him*, John vi. 40. Hath the great trumpet then so far rouzed and wakened you up, that you have got your eyes opened, not only to see the misty chain of spiritual captivity you were under to sin, Satan, and wrath; but also to see the Redeemer and Deliverer that is *come out of Zion*, to *turn away ungodliness from Jacob*, and that there is salvation in none other? Hath Christ, revealed to you by the word, been thus revealed in you, so as you have seen and perceived him to be the glorious and only Saviour?

2. Have you not only been made to hear the sound of the trumpet, thus wakening you out of your dead sleep, to a sense of sin and sight of the remedy; but, have you thereupon been made to *live? The dead shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live.* Now, how may this life be tried? Why, the text mentions also two parts of this life; first, they shall *come;* and next, they shall *worship in his holy mount.*

(1.) Then, have you been made to *come;* that is, to believe in Jesus, to fly for refuge to him, and to fly out of yourself, as having nothing but sin and guilt, hell and misery about you; to him, as having all for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?* Have you been brought under a sweet necessity of coming to Christ, and resolutely to throw yourself into his saving arms, saying, If I perish, let me perish there, where never one did? Have you found some secret drawing cord about your heart, making you restless

reſtleſs till you came to Chriſt for reſt to your heart and conſcience? Faith is an *entering into this reſt*, Heb. iv. 3.

(2.) Have you hereupon been made to come and *worſhip in the holy mount;* to worſhip God in Chriſt with holy fear and reverence, coming with humble boldneſs to the throne of grace? Hath your faith wrought by love, and the love of Chriſt conſtrained you to ſeek and ſerve him in his temple, and ordinances of his appointment. And, is this holy place the place of your abode, deſiring ſtill to *aſcend to the hill of the Lord*, and to *ſtand in his holy place?* The ſum of this mark is, Are you brought to David's *one* thing? *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his temple*, Pſal. xxvii. 4.

Now, examine yourſelf by theſe plain marks; for if you know nothing leſs or more thereof, whatever be your good diſpoſition at the time, you are a ſtranger in Iſrael, and have no right to a communion-table; but, if you have the experience of theſe marks, then, whatever be the alterations of your frame, you may conclude you are in a ſafe ſtate, as well as ſometimes in a ſpiritual frame; and ſo have a right to the great goſpel-feaſt of the Lord's ſupper in the holy mount, and may venture to it in his name and ſtrength.

The *third* uſe, with which I ſhall cloſe, may be in a word of *exhortation*, eſpecially to all the ſinners here that are yet in a *loſt ſtate* and condition *ready to periſh*, and like *outcaſts in the land of Egypt;* and we would blow the great trumpet in your hearing, and *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Our preaching the goſpel to you, is the accompliſhment of one promiſe; *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown:* and we are encouraged to this work, by the promiſes annexed to it, concerning outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, *They ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip.* Why then, in the name of the great King, whoſe unworthy herald I am, I do, as it were, by ſound of trum-

trumpet, proclaim life, to dead ſinners here; and liberty, to you captive ſinners; pardon and indemnity, to guilty rebellious ſinners; and purifying grace, to filthy polluted ſinners; and all to be had freely: *Whoſoever will, let him come and take of theſe waters of life freely.* Will you give a hearing to our great Lord, whoſe treaſure is put into earthen veſſels, and whoſe voice ſounds through earthen trumpets: for God's ſake, look over the poor unworthy inſtrument: little matter who blow the trumpet, if the breath of the Spirit convey the ſound into your heart. Look over the head of the poor ſervant; *The Maſter calls you*, even you that are afar off, and farer from God than Egypt and Aſſyria are from you; yet the ſound of the trumpet reaches to you.

What is your name, man, woman? Surely your name is in this text, if you be a *ſinner, ready to periſh.* "Alas! may ſome ſay, I am ſo ready to periſh, that I am ready to give over all duties of religion, and ready to doubt of all revealed religion, and of the very being of God, and truth of the ſcriptures; I am ready to blaſpheme, and to ſay, God is a liar. Oh! ſays another, I am ready to raze the foundation of all that ever was done in me, and ready to conclude, that now it is impoſſible I can be ſaved." Say on, ſoul; and tell me more in what reſpects you are ready to periſh. "Oh! ſay you, I am ready to pine away in my iniquity, and live in rebellion all my days, ſuch is the power of my corruption; yea, I am ready through fear and dread, and terrible temptations, to kill, deſtroy, and put away myſelf; and, *While I ſuffer the terrors of God, I am diſtracted:* I am ready to think, that the day of grace is paſt, and that I am a caſt-away." Are you an outcaſt, ready to periſh in the wilderneſs of darkneſs, ignorance, and confuſion? Are you an outcaſt, ready to periſh in a priſon of unbelief, atheiſm, enmity, and hard bound with all the chains of hell about you? Well, whatever priſon you be into, whatever outcaſt ſtate you be into, and in whatever reſpect you are ready to periſh, yet, O hear the ſound of the great trumpet, ſaying, Come, ye that are outcaſt ſinners;

come

come all ye that are ready to periſh; come to the great King, whoſe heralds we are; come to the great Saviour and Redeemer: you will never *worſhip* acceptably *in his holy mount*, till firſt you come; you will never communicate worthily, till firſt you come to Chriſt. O come while the trumpet ſounds, come and take his helping hand, who comes to *ſeek and ſave* you *that are loſt*. He offers to ſave you fully, to ſave you freely, to ſave you everlaſtingly. Since you cannot ſave yourſelf, will you welcome a Saviour? O what diſobliges you at him, who is as ready to ſave, as you are ready to periſh: and who ſays, *Welcome* to the worſt of you all; Young ſinner, old ſinner, great ſinner, chief of ſinners, come while the trumpet ſounds.

The ſecond coming of Chriſt to judgment is haſting on, and then the *trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall ariſe:* dead bodies will then riſe and come to the Judge at the ſound of the laſt trumpet. But now the great goſpel-trumpet calls dead ſouls to riſe and come to the Saviour; *The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear ſhall live.* Whenever dead bodies hear the laſt trumpet, they ſhall live; and whenever dead ſouls now hear the voice of the Son of God, in the great goſpel-trumpet, they ſhall live alſo.

"Alas! ſay you, I do not find a quickening power accompanying the word, and raiſing my ſoul to life." Why, what is the reaſon of that? Surely, *where the voice of a king is, there is power*, Eccleſ. viii. 4. And where the word, the voice of King Jeſus is heard, there is power. Perhaps, you are hearing the word delivered by us as the word of a man, and not as it is indeed the word of God, which would work effectually. As long as you hear but the voice of a man ſpeaking to you, there is no power, virtue, or efficacy; but, O tell me, do you hear the voice of the Son of God through this trumpet of man's voice? For we ſpeak to you in his name, whoſe name is *the God that quickens the dead, and calls things that be not, as though they were.* O then tell me, do you hear his voice, a voice that goes not into your ear only, but into your heart? Is the ſound of God's trumpet going in-through and out-through

your heart? Then, hope, there is some power; and if you be hearing his powerful voice, then rise, *the Master calls you.* Rise, dead Lazarus; rise, stupid soul, ye that are as stupid as the earth beneath your feet. *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.* The last trumpet will not be more powerful, to make the earth and sea give up their dead bodies, than this great gospel-trumpet is powerful to raise dead souls, if the Lord by the breathing of his Spirit be blowing it, and if you be hearing his voice; *They that hear shall live.* I have no more to say; and I have said nothing that will be heard, unless he say the word. Rise and live; rise and come to Jesus, and in this way *come and worship in his holy mount.*——May the Lord himself speak powerfully to you.

SERMON

SERMON CII.*

The *Sum* of the GOSPEL; or, GOD in CHRIST.

MATTHEW iii. 17.

——*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*

THIS chapter shews us two things principally, 1. The rising of the morning-star, *John the Baptist*, to prepare the way for Christ's appearing. 2. The more glorious rising and shining of the *Sun of righteousness* himself, particularly in Christ's baptism. Here is an *objection* John makes against baptizing Jesus, when he came to him to be baptized, ver 13, 14. *But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* Here is Christ's *over-ruling* objection, insisting upon the being baptized of him, and giving the reason of it, ver. 15. *And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* We have here the *solemnity* of the baptism; and here is from heaven a special display of heavenly glory, both to encourage Christ in his undertaking, now when entering upon his work, his public ministry, and to encourage us to receive him, in and through whom the heavens are opened to us. And hereupon we have,

1*st*, A *messenger* from heaven, and then a *voice*; *He saw the Spirit descending like a dove*, ver. 16. If there must be a *bodily* appearance, it must not be that of a *man*;

* This sermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Dunfermline, July 1[illegible], 1737. With some additional enlargement. It hath undergone five impressions,

for, the being seen in *fashion as a man*, was peculiar to the *second* person: none, therefore, more fit than the shape of one of the *fowls of heaven*, and of all fowls, none so significant as the *dove*. Why? The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like Spirit; not a *silly dove, without heart;* but an *innocent* dove, without gall, and harmless, inoffensive. The dove was the fowl offered in sacrifice; and Christ, *by the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God.* The tidings of the falling of the flood was brought by the dove, with an olive-branch in her mouth: fitly, therefore, is the glad tidings of peace with God brought by the Spirit as a dove, by *the voice of the turtle heard in our land;* by which, the Chaldee Paraphrase, understand the voice of the holy Spirit.

2*dly*, We have a *voice* from heaven. As the *Holy Ghost* manifests himself in the likeness of a *dove;* so God the *Father*, by a *voice;* and it is a voice that brings the best news that ever was heard, and that ever came from God to earth: for it speaks plainly forth God's favour to Christ, and then to us in him.

1. It speaks forth God's *favour* to Christ Jesus our Lord; *This is my Beloved Son.* This expresseth both his *relation* and *affection.*

(1.) It expresseth the *relation* he stands in to him; he is *my Son.* Christ is his Father's Son by eternal generation; thus, as *God*, he is *co-equal* with the Father, *begotten* of him before all worlds, Col. i. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:* as *man*, he is the *Son of God*, by supernatural conception, being *conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.* Also, he is the *Son of God*, by special *designation* to the work and office of Redeemer; he is sanctified, sealed and sent upon this errand, brought up with the Father for it, and appointed to it.

(2.) It expresseth the *affection* the Father hath for him, *This is my beloved Son;* he is his *dear Son*, the Son of his love, Col. i. 13. He had lain in his *bosom* from eternity, John i. 18; was always his *delight*, Prov. viii. 30. But particularly, as Mediator, and in undertaking the work of man's redemption, he was his

beloved

beloved Son; His *Elect, in whom his soul delighteth,* Isa. xlii. 1. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again,* John x. 17. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,* John iii. 35. Surely thus we may know and admire how he loved us, and the like of us, that *he hath not witheld his Son, his only Son,* his *Isaac whom he loved,* but gave him up a sacrifice for our sins; and that therefore he loved him *because he laid down his life* for us. Therefore,

2. Observe God's favour to us in him. He *is my beloved Son,* not only *with* whom, but IN *whom I am well-pleased.* Not only well-pleased *with* all that are in him, and unite to him by faith; but, being *in* him, I am well-pleased, and declare myself well-pleased, and satisfied.

The word signifies somewhat else than that *love, affection,* and *delight* in Christ, in the former clause. The word here εὐδόκησα, though it be a Greek word importing *approbation* and *affection;* yet it hath its signification, not from the Greek, but from the Hebrew; for this verse is taken from Isa. xlii. 1. *Mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth;* which, though it be rendered, as here, by the seventy Interpreters, yet properly it signifies to be *appeased, pacified, reconciled;* and so it is not only, *in whom I delight,* and *am well-pleased for thyself;* but also, *in whom I am quieted, and satisfied with all these that belong to thee.* This is the Sum of the Gospel, as it is expressed, 1 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* Out of Christ he is a *consuming fire;* but in Christ, he is a reconciled God; he offering himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us unto God.

From the words we observed two doctrinal propositions. The first was, *That Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is the beloved of the Father, the object of his highest love, delight, and esteem.* This doctrine being formerly †

† This first doctrine was handled in several stated discourses before the sacrament,

spoken

ſpoken to, at conſiderable length, I proceed now to the ſecond, *viz.*

DOCT. *That God is in Chriſt, and in him alone a well-pleaſed and pacified God.*

For proving and illuſtrating of this doctrine, ſee theſe parallel texts, Iſa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold ; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth :* compared with Mat. xii. 18. *Behold my Servant, whom I have choſen ; my Beloved, in whom my ſoul is well-pleaſed* Iſa. xlix. 3. *Thou art my Servant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified,* John xiii. 31. *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.* Mat. xvii. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed ; hear ye him.* 1 Cor. v. 15. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf.*

The method we lay down, for the further proſecuting of this ſubject, through divine aſſiſtance, ſhall be as follows,

I. We ſhall ſpeak of God's being *in Chriſt.*
II. Enquire how God is in Chriſt.
III. Shew that in Chriſt he is *well-pleaſed.*
IV. Make *application* of the whole ſubject.

I. We are to ſpeak of God's being *in Chriſt.* For underſtanding this, we may conſider, 1. What God is out of Chriſt. 2. What God is in Chriſt.

1ſt, What God is *out* of Chriſt to the ſinner. Why, he is an offended, a threatening, a diſhonoured, and a diſtant God.

1. God out of Chriſt is to a ſinner an *angry* God ; Pſal. vii. 11. *God judgeth the righteous ; God is angry with the wicked every day:* or, it may be read, *God is the* RIGHTEOUS JUDGE ; *God is angry with the wicked every day ;* becauſe he is a righteous Judge, therefore he cannot but be diſpleaſed, offended, and angry with them , and, oh ! but the wrath and anger of God is a terrible matter. *Who knows the power of his wrath ?* When *it begins to burn*, it burns *to the loweſt hell.*

2. God

2. God out of Christ is a *threatening* God; his anger manifests itself in threatenings and curses; Psal. vii. 12, 13. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he hath ordained his arrows* for taking vengeance; and his threatenings are not bare words; but as God, in Christ, gives a being to his words of grace; so God, out of Christ, gives a being to his words of wrath, saying, as it is, Deut. xxxii. 39, 40, 41. *See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood*, &c. God, out of Christ, is a God whose mouth is full of curses and threatenings, and whose hand is full of terrible vengeance for executing the threatening; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them*, Gal. iii. 10.

3. A God out of Christ is a *dishonoured* God; and this is the reason why he is an angry God and a threatening God, because he is a dishonoured God; for *sin being a transgression of God's law*, 1 John iii. 4.; his authority is contemned, his wisdom slighted, his power vilipended, his holiness baffled, his justice enraged, and all his glorious attributes abused and affronted.

4. God out of Christ is a *distant* God: sin having set God and man at variance, and at a distance from one another; therefore men are said to be *afar off*, Acts ii. 39. Eph. ii. 13,—17. Not in respect of any *local* distance: for God is every where; but in point of *moral* distance. We are far from the image of God, far from the favour of God, far from the knowledge of God, far from the love of God, far from the life of God, *being alienate therefrom, through the ignorance that is in us*, Eph. iv. 18; and from any relation to God, except that of a vindictive Judge, and an avenger of sin, a consuming fire, ready to break out every moment in ever-

everlasting flames; between which, and the Christless sinner, there is nothing but the weak tender thread of life, which the least spark of that fire of God's wrath can burn and break, and then he falls into the depth of endless and irremediless torment.——Thus you have a short account what God *out* of Christ is.

2*dly*, We may consider what God is *in* Christ: Why?

1. God in Christ is a *reconciled* God, whose anger is appeased, and quenched by the blood of his eternal Son, *offering up himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God*; upon which account he proclaims here, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* And sends ministers to proclaim the word of reconciliation, *viz. That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19.

2. As a God out of Christ is a threatening God, so a God in Christ is a *promising* God. The covenant of promise being sealed and confirmed by the death and blood of Christ, which covenant, is therefore called *the New-testament in his blood*, 1 Cor. xi. 25. And the condition of all the promises being so well fulfilled, the price of them being so well paid, they come to us in the dispensation of the gospel freely and absolutely, to be received *without money, and without price*, because the money and price is already paid down to the full, in the liquid gold of the blood of the God-man; that being freely received, we may wait with assured hope till they be fully accomplished, because *all the promises of God are in Christ Yea, and in him, Amen, to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. i. 10.

3. A God in Christ is a *glorified* God: as God out of Christ to a sinner is a God abused and dishonoured; so God in Christ is a God glorified and honoured; Christ having fulfilled, yea, *magnified the law*, Isaiah xlii. 21.; he hath *brought in everlasting righteousness*; made restitution of all that honour to God and his perfections, that sin took away; *Then I restored that which I took not away*, Psal. lxix. 4. And Christ testifies this; *I have*

I have glorified thee on earth, even on earth, where thou waſt diſhonoured: why? *I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do*, John xvii. 4. God in Chriſt is a God not only whoſe mercy is magnified, but alſo whoſe truth is vindicated, whoſe holineſs is celebrated, whoſe juſtice is ſatisfied, whoſe wiſdom and power, and other attributes, are made more conſpicuous in redemption work, than ever they were in making heaven and earth; and a God in whom we may look for ſalvation through Chriſt to the honour, the higheſt honour and glory of all his excellencies.

4. A God in Chriſt is a *nearly approaching* God, a *nearly related* God.—In Chriſt, he comes near *graciouſly*, ſaying, *I bring near my righteouſneſs; it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry: and I will place ſalvation in Zion for Iſrael my glory*, Iſa. xlvi. 13.—And he comes near *relatively*, ſaying, *I will be* THY *God, and thou ſhalt be* MY *people*: and that upon account of Chriſt's approaching to God in our room, as our Surety; *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* Jer. xxx. 21. Hence the near relation is promiſed; *And ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God*, ver. 22. And this near approach and relation of God to us in Chriſt, is an everlaſting nearneſs; and hence we have him ſaying, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5.; and the church, ſaying, *This God is our God for ever and ever; and he will be our guide even unto death*, Pſal. xlviii. 14. ——Thus much for what God is in *Chriſt*.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed, was, To ſhew *how* God is in Chriſt. For clearing this we may conſider, 1. What it is *of* God, that is in Chriſt. 2. *How*, and in what *manner* God *was* and *is* in Chriſt. 3. What *of* Chriſt God is in.

1ſt, What it is *of* God that is in Chriſt. I ſhall confine myſelf to theſe two comprehenſive things, namely, 1. All the *perſons* of the God-head are in Chriſt. 2. All the *fulneſs* of the God-head is in Chriſt. And, here is a ſubject for deep momentuous thoughts and conſiderations.

[1.] All the *perſons* of the Godhead are in Chriſt ; I mean, God the Father is in Chriſt ; God the Son is in Chriſt ; God the Holy Ghoſt is in Chriſt ; one God, in three perſons is in Chriſt.

1. God the *Father* is in Chriſt ; *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* John xiv. 10. And ver. 11. *Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And hence he is called *the way* to the Father, ver. 6. And there is *no coming to the Father but in him*, becauſe the Father is in him ; that is, even the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity : and yet not excluding his being the way to the other perſons of the glorious Trinity : Therefore,

2. God the *Son* is in Chriſt : as God the Son is Chriſt ; ſo God the Son is in Chriſt : that is to ſay, God the Son, conſidered as the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, is in Chriſt, conſidered as Mediator between God and man. The divine perſon of the Son is as innacceſſible to us, as the divine perſon of the Father ; and we need a Mediator between him and us as he is God, as well as between the Father and us : for, as there is an eſſential Oneneſs between him and the Father ; *I and my Father are one*, John x. 30. : ſo there is a perſonal Equality ; *Being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. Therefore his infinite holineſs and juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, as well as the Father's, by the doing and dying of Chriſt, as Mediator, otherwiſe we could never have acceſs to God ; Chriſt the Son, being God co-equal and co-eſſential with the Father : and hence, Chriſt, as *Mediator*, is the *way* to himſelf, as *God*, as well as he is the way to the Father ; becauſe he is the way to God : *Chriſt having once ſuffered for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Peter iii. 18. *By him we believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21. And hence, as Saviour, God-man ; and Mediator, between God and man, he calls us to come to himſelf, as God ; *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none elſe*, Iſa. xlv. 22. As *Mediator*, he

he is the *means*, by whom; and as *God*, he is the *end*, to whom we come. Here you see it is necessary we understand and distinguish between Christ considered *essentially*, as to his divine nature, and as he is one with the Father; and *personally*, as to his divine person, and as he is equal with the Father; and *œconomically*, as to his divine office of Mediator, and as he is God's Servant in the work of our redemption: Servant to himself, as well as to the Father, while he came to fulfil his own law, and satisfy his own justice, being in this service considered as a middle person between God and man, and that contradistinct from his being the middle person between the Father and the Holy Ghost: Therefore,

3. God the *Holy Ghost* is in Christ. The third person of the glorious Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, he also is *in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, 2 Cor. v. 20; for he is one God with the Father and the Son: *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one*, 1 John v. 7. When I say the *Holy Ghost* is in Christ; I mean not here the supereminent unction of the Spirit, that is so much spoken of in scripture, his being anointed with the *Spirit above measure*, to qualify him for his mediatorial office; but I mean, that the Holy Ghost, who is one God with the Father and the Son, is in Christ, reconciled in Christ, satisfied in Christ, appeased in Christ, as well as the Father and the Son; for, *God is one:* and it is GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that was offended by sin; and it is this GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is reconciled, through the mediation and satisfaction of Christ; so that if this reconciliation had not been made, we could have approached to none of the persons of the glorious Trinity with acceptance; but now access is made to all alike, because access is made to God, or to the divine nature, which is the same in all the three persons.

Well, when you consider what of God is in Christ, remember that all the persons of the Godhead are in Christ; and let this rectify their misapprehensions, who

have dreamed, that Christ is Mediator between God and us: whereas GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is, that ONE God between whom and us Christ is Mediator. When we address ourselves to God, through Christ, for example, in prayer, most usually we do, and should pitch upon the Father by name, being the first person in order of subsistence; but we are to beware of thinking, that he alone is prayed unto, and none of the rest of the persons: or whatever of the three persons we have occasion to name; think not that he alone, and none other, is prayed unto, excluding the rest: for this would not be a worshipping the true God, who is one as to essence, and three as to persons, or personal subsistence. We cannot look aright to one person, without eyeing the others; for, *he that sees the Son, seeth the Father*; and he that sees the Father and the Son, sees the Holy Ghost; for the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and the Holy Ghost in both. The object of *worship* is ONE, *viz.* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; and the object of *faith* is ONE, *namely*, GOD, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in and through Christ. It is a mental error to worship first one person and then another, as the Popish and Prelatical forms seem to lead unto; *Lord have mercy on us; Christ have mercy on us*, &c.; as if there were divers objects of worship. We are to beware of worshipping Christ, and then worshipping God, as if they were distinct objects of worship, otherwise we worship not the true God. The proper object is not God and Christ as two, but God in Christ and so the object is one.

[2.] As all the persons of the Godhead are in Christ, so *all the fulness* of the Godhead is in him; *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. I shall hear mention a threefold fulness, *viz.* A fulness of *divinity*, a fulness of *sufficiency*, a fulness of *efficiency*.

1. A fulness of *divinity*, or of the Godhead; and *all* the fulness of the Godhead. God's gifts and graces are found in others; but the *Godhead* itself is to be found in Christ; and not a partial, but *all* the fulness

neſs of the Godhead, and that *bodily;* that is, really, ſubſtantially, or perſonally. The Son is the ſame individual nature with the Father: and Arians muſt anſwer for their blaſphemy, who would rob Chriſt of the honour of his Deity, ſeeing there is but one Deity, one Divinity, one Eſſence, between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

2. He hath a fulneſs of *ſufficiency*, beſides his *natural* fulneſs as God. *It pleaſed the Father, that in him*, as Mediator, *all fulneſs ſhould dwell*, Col. i. 19. As Joſeph filled the granaries of Egypt with corn: why? becauſe not only Egypt, but all the nations round about were to be ſupplied with corn in time of famine; ſo it pleaſed God that *in Chriſt ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, that all Jews and Gentiles might come to him for grace; all muſt go through the hand of Joſeph to the people. The ſea is full of water; becauſe it is to convey water to all the rivers. The ſun is full of light; becauſe it conveys light to all the world: ſo Chriſt is full of grace; becauſe he is to be the conveyer of grace: he is anointed *with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows*. And there is, therefore, this fulneſs of ſufficiency in Chriſt; becauſe there is in him a fulneſs of divinity. The human nature, being perſonally united with the Godhead, muſt partake of all grace; and it is neceſſary he ſhould have a fulneſs of ſufficiency, becauſe of his threefold office; hence, as a Prophet, he hath a fulneſs of wiſdom; as a Prieſt, a fulneſs of righteouſneſs; and as a King, a fulneſs of power. Therefore,

3. He hath a fulneſs of *efficiency;* ſuch a filling fulneſs, wherewith all believers are filled, Eph. i. 23. which is his righteouſneſs; *The fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.* In all believers, Chriſt fills all the faculties of their ſouls; the underſtanding, with light; the will, with liberty; the heart, with life; and every member of Chriſt's body is filled according to its meaſure; *The meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 13. All have not alike meaſure; one is full as an arm, another is full as a finger; yet every one hath the fulneſs of a member; and all put together, make

make up the fulneſs of Chriſt-myſtical.——In a word, all God's bleſſings are in Chriſt, all his conſolations, attributes, and promiſes are in him; of which more afterwards.

2*dly*, We may conſider *how* and in what *manner* God was and is in Chriſt.

1. God was in Chriſt in the counſel of peace *federally*; making a *covenant with his choſen*: preparing a remedy from all eternity againſt that ruin the forelaw man would run into, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. Hence the grace of the new covenant is ſaid to be given *before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9.

2. God was in Chriſt in the promiſe *repreſentatively*, Gen. iii. 15. *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.* As he was repreſented by the *ſeed of the woman*, ſo by the *ſeed of Abraham* in the promiſe; *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed*, Gen. xxii. 18. *Now, to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, and to ſeeds as of many, but as of one; and thy ſeed, which is Chriſt*, Galatians iii. 16.

3. God was in Chriſt, in the ceremonial law, *typically*: the paſchal lamb, typified the *Lamb of God that takes away the ſin of the world*, John i. 29. The *ark of the covenant*, typified *Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant*. The *blood of the ſin-offering*, typified *the blood of Chriſt, that cleanſeth from all ſin.*

4. God was in Chriſt, in his incarnation, *actually* and perfectly, according to both natures of God and man, in one perſon; then the promiſe was performed when it was ſaid, *Unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 11.

5. God was in Chriſt, in his mediatorial office, *obedientially*; and that both in the active obedience of his life, and paſſive obedience at his death: for, he *came to do the will of him that ſent him; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 10.

6. God was in Chriſt, is his reſurrection, *victoriouſly*; for then *he aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light*, 2 Tim. i. 10. *Through death he deſtroyed*

troyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii. 14.

7. God was in Christ, in his ascension, *triumphantly*; for, *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Psal. lxviii. 18. And, *having received gifts for men*, he *gave gifts unto men, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying the body of Christ*, Eph. iv. 12.

8. God is in Christ, in his kingdom, *gloriously*; he *being* now *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 10. Because *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, &c. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.—Thus you may understand in what *respect* God is in Christ.

3*dly*, It may be enquired, what *of* Christ God is in.

1. God is in the *human nature* of Christ; *The Word was made flesh*; and *God is manifested in the flesh*, John i. 3. 1 Timothy iii. 16. This is the special way wherein God is in Christ by a hypostatical union, he being God-man in one person. His human nature is God's temple, where he dwells; his mercy-seat, where he abides; his throne, where he reigns graciously and gloriously: and, O! what good news is it, God is in our nature! God is in our flesh!

2. God is in the *mediatorial offices* of Christ; every office of Christ is an habitation of God; the wisdom of God, is in his prophetical office; the righteousness of God, is in his priestly office; the power of God, is in his kingly office: therefore he is called, *The power of God, and the wisdom of God, and the righteousness of God*. Hence,

3. God is in the *name* of Christ; and there is not a name that Christ hath, but if we could believingly view it, we would find God in it. Is his name *Immanuel?* God is there, as a *God with us*. Is his name *Jesus?* God is there, as a *Saviour for us*. Is his name *Christ?* God is there, *anointing him to save sinners*. And because

cauſe God is his name, therefore his name is as *ointment poured forth*, Song i. 3.

4. God is in the *church* of Chriſt; therefore her name is called JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, *the Lord is there*, Ezek. xlviii. 35. In the *inviſible* church, God is in every member of Chriſt; in every friend and follower of Chriſt; and the more they follow the ſteps of Chriſt, the more of God is to be ſeen in and about them.—And when they have much of Chriſt in them, then it is ſometimes obſervable by on-lookers, *that God is in them of a truth*, 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

5. God is in the *treaſure* of Chriſt; *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. All the treaſures of grace and glory, all the treaſures of light and life, and ſpiritual bleſſings which he hath purchaſed, God is in them all; yea, God himſelf is the ſum total of the treaſure that is in him.

6. God is in the *croſs* of Chriſt, in the worſt as well as the beſt of Chriſt: and hence the apoſtle *glories in the croſs of Chriſt*, Gal. vi. 14.; and his people *glory in tribulation*, Rom. v. 3. When he orders a rod, a croſs, a trial to his people, God is in it: hence the *fiery trial* doth but *purge away their droſs*. A reconciled God is in the croſs of Chriſt; and hence it is made ſo light and eaſy, ſo ſweet and portable, ſo beneficial and profitable, that it comes to be among the beſt of their bleſſings: *It was good for me that I was afflicted. Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt out of thy law.* The cup may be bitter to fleſh and blood, but there is no death in the cup; nay, God is in it, his bleſſing is in it, and his Spirit is in it, if it be the croſs of Chriſt.

7. God is in the *work* of Chriſt, not only in his work of creation and providence, whereof Chriſt is the author and upholder, is God to be ſeen in his infinite power and wiſdom, but eſpecially in his works of grace and redemption. God is in his work that he works *for us*. As God was in all his miracles; ſo in his doing and dying on earth, and in his pleading and interceding in heaven. God is in theſe works of his; *They are the doings of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.*

God

God is in his work that he works *in us*, when he comes to convince and convert ſinners, and draw them to himſelf, O Sirs, the finger of God is in it; then is *the arm of God revealed*, Iſa. liii. 1.

8. God is in the *word* of the goſpel of Chriſt.—When Chriſt is offered in this goſpel, God is offered in him; when Chriſt is revealed, God is revealed in him. And, O! when the goſpel-revelation is effectual, then it is the very *power of God to ſalvation*, Rom. i. 16. Thus there are ſome outward viſible things, wherein you may ſee and diſcern the inviſible God; if they be the things of Chriſt, ſuch as the goſpel of Chriſt, the preached word, the outward diſpenſation of the goſpel, and the written word; ſay not, God *is far off*, if the word be nigh you, *even in your heart and mouth*, Rom. x. 18.

9. God is in the *heart* of Chriſt: why, the love of God is in his heart, and the law of God is in his heart; *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart;* or, as it is in the Hebrew, *It is in the* MIDST OF MY BOWELS, Pſal. xl. 8. As Chriſt lies in the Father's boſom; ſo the Father lies, as it were, in his boſom, in the midſt of his bowels. If you could look into the heart of Chriſt, you would ſee nothing but God, the love of the law of God there, the glory of God.

10. God is in the *hand* of Chriſt: as God is in the heart of Chriſt, inſomuch, that he is the greateſt lover of God; ſo God is in the hand of Chriſt, inſomuch, that he is the only giver of God. What is the great gift of the new covenant? Why, God himſelf is the great gift, according to that promiſe, *I will be thy God.* Who is the giver of ſuch a great gift? Who but Chriſt, into whoſe hand all things are given, and all the new covenant goods and bleſſings, even he whom God hath *given to be the covenant of the people.* It is ſtrange, and yet true, Chriſt is the great gift of God, and God is the great gift of Chriſt: God gives Chriſt to us, and then Chriſt gives God to us. He gives God, and he gives himſelf, and he gives his Spirit; and he comes with all theſe gifts in his hand, and preſents and pro

fers them to us freely, under the notion of living waters; *Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17.——Thus you may have some view *how* God is in Christ.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, To shew, that in *Christ alone* God is a *well-pleased* God. This will appear, if you consider, 1. What God hath done with respect to *Christ himself*. 2. What he doth for his *people, in him*.

1*st*, We may consider what he *hath done* with respect to *Christ himself*.

1. He hath solemnly proclaimed his *approbation* of his person and undertaking from heaven, three several times, with an audible voice, namely, at his baptism, transfiguration, and passion; *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased*. Agreeable to which is that open proclamation, Isa. xlii. 1. *Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*.

2. He hath *released* him from the *prison of the grave*, in which, as our Surety, he was detained for a time; *He was taken from prison and from judgment*, says the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 8. He was taken from thence by a public sentence; which was an undoubted argument, that the debt, for which he was thrown in prison, was fully paid; and the Lord was well-pleased with the ransom. Hence it is very observable, that the resurrection of Christ is ascribed unto God, as reconciled; *The God of peace* is said to bring *again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep*, Heb. xiii. 20.

3. The *authority*, and *power*, and *honour* wherewith our Surety is invested, as a reward of his hard work, is an evidence, that God is well-pleased in him.

QUEST. *What reward hath he conferred on him?*

ANSW. (1.) He hath set him at his own *right-hand in the highest heavens*; Heb. xii. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God*. The martyr Stephen, in his dying words,

words, Acts vii. 56. says, that he *saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* Had he been shut out of his Father's presence, it had been a sign that anger still lodged in his breast, both against the Cautioner and the principal; but his being re-admitted into that glory which he had with *the Father before the world began*, is an evidence, that he is well-pleased in him.

(2.) He honours him with a *complete victory* over all his enemies. He makes all the powers of hell to be prostrate at his feet; Psal. cx. 1. *Sit thou at my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Phil. ii. 9, 10. *At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*, &c. When man sinned, God delivered the power of death unto the devil, as his executioner; but he found such a sweet savour in the righteousness of the Surety, that he wrests the keys of death out of the devil's hand, and delivers them into the hand of our Redeemer. Hence Christ proclaims it as good news to all his friends, Rev. i. 17. *I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.*

(3.) He not only makes him victorious over all the powers of hell, but, as Mediator, invests him with a *precedency* over all the angels in heaven; *And every name that can be named, either in this world, or the world* that is *to come.* Heb. i. 4. *Being made so much better than the angels, as by inheritance he hath obtained a more excellent name than they.* And in the sixth verse, *When he brings in his first begotten into the world, he says, Let all the angels of God worship him.* Doth not this say, that God is well-pleased in him?

(4.) He hath clothed him with all *judicative authority*, and constitute him the sole Judge of the world; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained*, Acts xvii. 31.

2*dly*, We may consider what *he doth* for his peo-

ple, these for whom Christ is Surety; and from thence it will appear, that God is well-pleased in him.

1. In him, and for his sake, he *pardons* all their sins; *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins*, Rom. iii. 25.

2. In him, and for his sake, he *hears their prayers*; Rev. viii. 3, 4. *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.* This is the incense that renders them acceptable unto God, and without which they would be an abomination.

3. In him, and for his sake, he admits them into *communion* and *fellowship* with himself; *By the blood of Jesus we have access to the holy of holies*, &c. Heb. x. 19,—22.

4. In him, and for his sake, they have *adoption*, with all the privileges that attend it; *In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

5. In him, and for his sake, they have access to *glory* at last. The righteousness of Christ, removes the bar that bolts heavens gates against us, which was sin, Heb. ii. 10. and v. 9.; there says the apostle, *Christ was made perfect through suffering, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory.*——Now, from these things it is clear, that God is *well-pleased* in Christ.

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed was, To make *application*, and it may be applied,

1st, By way of *information*. Is *God in Christ?* Then let us see God here; for here is the glass wherein we may see all the divine glory: in Christ we may see God in all his attributes and fulness; in all his saving offices and relations to us; in all his graces, and in all his blessings.

1. In

1. In Chriſt we may ſee God in all his *attributes* and *fulneſs*; there is nothing that the Father hath, except his perſonality, but the Son, as Mediator hath; *All things that the Father hath, are mine*, John vi. 15.; all things that God hath, they belong to the Mediator, alſo the God-man. Here then is an ocean where you and I may dive for ever, and never reach to the bottom. In him we may ſee the *wiſdom* of God; *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Poor fooliſh ſinner, who haſt no wiſdom, knowledge, or underſtanding, here is a treaſure for you, Chriſt, the *wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 30.—In him we may ſee all the *power* of God; *We preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them that are called, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. Poor weakling, that can do nothing, here is a bargain for you to lay hold upon; *It is he that can work in you, both to will and to do*; and make his *people willing in the day of his power*, Pſal. cx. 3. You are not called to come to Chriſt, but by the power of Chriſt, which is the power of God; you are to receive him, who can give you power to receive him; and as an abſolute weakling to take hold of his ſtrength, and look to his power, to whom is given *all power in heaven and in earth*.—In him we may ſee all the *holineſs* of God; he is ſaid to be made of God to us *ſanctification*: and ſurely, here is an immenſe fountain of ſanctity, the infinite holineſs of God. O poor, vile polluted ſinner, that haſt loſt the image of God by the fall of the firſt Adam, and the deficiency of his holineſs; here is a better Head and Huſband for you, in whom is all the fulneſs of divine holineſs, that ye may be complete in him.—In him we may ſee all the *juſtice* of God, and all the *righteouſneſs* of God; we may ſee juſtice *ſatisfied* in him, by his mediatorial righteouſneſs; for, the *Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake*; yea, he that is the *righteouſneſs of God is made unto us righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 30.; And, O wonderful word! 2 Cor. v. 21. *He was made* SIN *for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*. O guilty, guilty ſinner, here

here is a joyful ſound in your ears ; *He that hath ears to hear let him hear :* you may, in Chriſt, be more righteous in God's ſight than ever you was guilty in his ſight ; yea, you may be the VERY *righteouſneſs of God in him ;* you may not only be *juſtified*, but find God to be *juſt* in *juſtifying you ;* becauſe the juſtice of God is in him, and it is ſatisfied in him, magnified in him, glorified in him.—In him we may ſee all the *mercy* of God : all the infinite love, pity, and compaſſion of God is in him, in his heart : what is Chriſt, but the love of God wrapt up in the garments of fleſh and blood ? *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins*, John iv. 9, 10. And Jude, verſe 21. *Keep yourſelves in the love of God.* How ? *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* O poor miſerable ſinner, would you wiſh to find mercy in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day ! Know there is no mercy to be expected from God out of Chriſt ; and unleſs you look to his mercy as in Chriſt ; for he will never ſhew mercy to the prejudice of his juſtice : and it is only in Chriſt that *mercy and truth meet together, and embrace each other.*—— In him we may ſee all the *faithfulneſs* and *truth* of God ; *My mercy and my faithfulneſs ſhall be with him*, Pſalm lxxxix. 24. I have obſerved, (as I formerly noticed, upon another diſcourſe,) between thirty and forty places of ſcripture, where mercy and truth, mercy and faithfulneſs are joined together ; and here you ſee they are joined together in Chriſt. In him the mercy and love of God vents to the honour of divine truth pledged, even in all the threatenings of the law, as well as divine truth pledged in all the promiſes of the goſpel ; becauſe in him all the threatenings and curſes of the law have ſpent their force, Gal. iii. 13. *And in him are all the promiſes Yea and Amen, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20. He is *the way* and *the truth ;* truth itſelf, the God of truth, the truth of God. O perfidious, faithleſs, unfaithful, and treacherous ſinner, that hath

hath many times lied to the God of truth, would you have your falſhood all done away, and ſwallowed up in the truth and veracity of God, and your ſalvation ſecured, notwithſtanding of your falſhood, fickleneſs, and inſtability? Here is a pillar on which you may ſtand firm and fixed amidſt all changes, whether in your outward lot or inward frame; *For all fleſh is graſs, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.* The truth of God ſtands unalterably the ſame.——Again, in him we may ſee all the *authority* of God; *My name is in him*, Exod. xxiii. 21. O! poor loſt ſinner, when Chriſt in his goſpel, comes *to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*; ſay not, *By what authority doth he theſe things?* He is the Sent and Sealed of God; and he hath all the authority that God can give him: and if you aſk, By what authority we, poor ſinful mortal worms like yourſelves, do offer him, and all his riches to you? Indeed we could have no authority, if he had not ſaid, *Go preach the goſpel to every creature: And lo I am with you to the end of the world.*——In a word, in him we may ſee all the *fulneſs* of God; *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19. In him dwells *all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily:* not only all the *attributes* of God, but all the fulneſs of all the divine attributes; not only the *wiſdom* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine wiſdom; not only the *power* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine power; not only the *holineſs* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine holineſs; not only the *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine righteouſneſs; not only the *mercy* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine mercy; not only the *truth* and *faithfulneſs* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine faithfulneſs; not only the *authority* of God, but all the fulneſs of divine authority: not only is God in him, but all the fulneſs of the Godhead. O poor, empty ſinner, here *is unſearchable riches*, a bottomleſs well of everlaſting ſalvation and conſolation for you.

2. In Chriſt we ſee God in all his *ſaving offices*. You know the Father hath anointed him to the office of Prophet, Prieſt, and King: O Sirs, what employment will you put in his hand? It is he, as a Prophet, who ſays,

They

They shall be all taught of God; look to him for the promised teaching. It is he, as a Priest, who says, upon the ground of the sacrifice he hath offered, *I, even I, am he that pardoneth thine iniquity for my own name's sake;* look to him for remission in his blood. It is he, as a King, who says, *I will subdue your iniquities; sin shall not have dominion over you.* O ignorant sinner, will you find in your heart to refuse such a Prophet as Christ is? *Who teacheth like him?* O guilty sinner, will you refuse such a High Priest as this? such a sacrifice as this is? O inslaved sinner, will you refuse the help of such a King and Conqueror as this? If there be none of these offices to be dispensed with, then take hold of him in them all.

3. In Christ we may see God as he is clothed with all *relations* that can contribute to the happiness of a sinner. What friend or relation do you want, O sinner?—Want you a *Father* to pity you? Behold here you have an *everlasting Father;* for that is his name, Isa. ix. 6.; and *in him the fatherless find mercy.*—Want you a *mother* to be tender to you? Behold, here motherless children may have their losses made up; *When father and mother forsake you,* here is one to *take you up,* Psalm xxvii. 10. He is one that can be a thousand times better to you than father or mother; and manifests more love than the tenderest mother that ever was; *Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee,* Isaiah xlix. 15.—Want you a *husband!* O! what would you think to be married with the *Heir of all things?* Why, if the ear of faith be opened, you may hear him saying, *Thy maker is thy husband,* Isaiah liv. 5. And again, Hosea ii. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.* If you say, Oh! how will it be consistent with the justice of God, for him to marry such a black bride? Why, he says, *I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness.* If you say, How will it be consistent with the wisdom, mercy, truth and faithfulness of God, to betroth the like of me? He says, *I will betroth thee unto me in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto*

unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the Lord. Thou ſhalt know God in Chriſt, who can betroth thee to himſelf, and yet be infinitely juſt, and wiſe, and merciful, and faithful in doing ſo; becauſe *mercy and truth have met together* in Chriſt, the glorious Bridegroom; they ſtrike up a match together, *and embrace each other*, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Chriſt and you.—Want you a proper match then, O ſinner, or *a meet help*, poor bankrupt, run in ſuch arears to the law and juſtice of God? Is not he that hath *unſearchable riches*, a fit match for you? Poor, dying creature, that will be food for worms in a little, here is a living Head for you, that can make you *live for ever*. O mortal worm, here is an immortal Huſband for you. Poor, changeable creature, here is an unchangeable Match for you, Chriſt, *The ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.*—Want you a *lover?* Are you an outcaſt, that reckons yourſelf deſpiſed by all the world, inſomuch that none cares for you, nor loves you? Behold an infinitely loving and lovely Jeſus tendering his love to you, ſaying, *I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely*, Hoſea xiv. 4. And he is ſeeking your conjugal love, ſaying, *My ſon give me thy heart.*—Want you a *leader* through the dark and difficult ſteps of your way; a guide, a director, and counſellor, in whatſoever affair you have upon your hand, wherein you need to be directed? O Sirs, here is the *wonderful Counſellor*, who ſays, Iſaiah xlii. 16. *I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths that they have not known. I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight.*—Want you a *ſhepherd* to feed you? or a *captain* to fight your battles for you?—Want you a *phyſician*, when in ſickneſs, to heal you?—Want you a *refiner* and *purifier*, when you are in the furnace, to purge away your droſs? Behold a God in Chriſt hath all the happy relations you can deſire.

4. In Chriſt we ſee God in all his *graces*. This is a great part of *the glory of the only begotten of the Father, that* he *is full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. And *out*

of his fulneſs have we all received, and grace for grace, verſe 16. *Grace is poured into his lips*, Pſalm xl. 2. ; and, I hope, he is pouring grace from his lips by his word among ſome of you this day. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon* him ; *for he hath anointed* him ; he *is anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows ;* anointed with the Spirit of all grace.—Want you grace to *believe?* Behold it is in him, as he is the *Author of faith.*—Want you grace to *repent?* Behold it is in him as *a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance.*—Do you want grace to *pray?* It is he that hath the *Spirit of prayer* to give, Zech. xii. 10.—Do you want grace to *communicate* aright; grace to *mortify* ſin ; grace to *bear the croſs ;* grace to *reſiſt temptation ;* grace to *do* and *ſuffer?* It is he that hath all grace to give, and who ſays, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you.* Hence his people are called to *be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

5. In Chriſt we may ſee God in all his *bleſſings* which he hath to give. He is the Lord-Diſpenſer of *temporal* bleſſings ; for, *The earth is his, and the fulneſs thereof:* the Lord-Diſpenſer of *ſpiritual* bleſſings ; for heaven is his and the fulneſs thereof: the Lord-Diſpenſer of *eternal* bleſſings ; for eternal life is in him, and he is *the true God, and eternal life.* It was promiſed of him, that men *ſhould be bleſſed in him ;* and accordingly he is *ſent to bleſs us*, Acts iii. 26. *God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* I might here enumerate many particular bleſſings. The bleſſing of *illumination* is in him, for, he is *the light to lighten the Gentiles :* the bleſſing of *converſion* is in him ; for he ſays, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to me :* the bleſſing of *juſtification* is in him ; for, *We are juſtified freely by his grace :* the bleſſing of *reconciliation* with God is in him ; for, it is he that makes *peace by the blood of his croſs :* the bleſſing of *ſanctification* is in him ; for, *He is made of God to us ſanctification :* the bleſſing of *acceptation* with God is in him ; for, *We are accepted in the Beloved :* the bleſſing of *acceſs* to God is in him ; for. *By him we have boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence thro' faith*

faith of him: the bleſſing of *conſolation* is in him; for, *He is the conſolation of Iſrael:* the bleſſing of a *happy death* is in him; for, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord:* the bleſſing of a *happy reſurrection* is in him; for, *He is the reſurrection and the life:* the bleſſing of a *happy ſentence* at the great day is in him, and at his diſpoſal; for, *All judgment is committed unto* him; and it is he that will ſay to the wicked, *Depart from me, ye curſed;* and to the righteous, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father:* the bleſſing of *eternal glorification* is in him; for, as he is the glory of the higher houſe, ſo he ſays, *Father, I will that theſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;* and *ſo ſhall they ever be with the Lord.* Can you tell me any ſpiritual bleſſing that is not in him? No; Eph. i. 3. *We are bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places,* only *in Chriſt.* And now, after all, what think you of him? Have you no heart to join hand with ſuch a well furniſhed Saviour, *In whom dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily?* If you have no heart to ſuch a good bargain, this is very ſad: but, becauſe it is a day of glad tidings, I will tell you, among all other things, that all hearts are in his hand, and it is his prerogative to open the locked heart. It is eaſy with him to create a clean heart, to melt the hard heart, to fix the wandering heart, to cleanſe the filthy heart, to elevate the drooping heart, to conquer the ſtubborn heart, to quicken the dead heart, to draw the backward heart, as we formerly obſerved, in another diſcourſe; and if any thing draw your heart to him, it will be the revelation of his grace and fulneſs; and of God's being in him, and in him a well-pleaſed God §.

FURTHER, in the light of this truth, particularly that *God is in Chriſt*, we may ſee,

1. How *little of God* is in the *preſent generation;* for, if God be in Chriſt, and only in Chriſt, then a generation that is without Chriſt, is without God. A Chriſt-

§ Here the action-ſermon ended, in order to give place to communicating, the proper work of the day. What follows was delivered afterwards.

leſs generation is a Godleſs generation ; God is not to be found where Chriſt is not to be found. If Chriſt be not in a family, God is not there : if Chriſt be not in the heart, God is not there : if Chriſt be not in a ſermon, God is not there. Where Chriſt is owned, God is owned : where Chriſt is diſhonoured, God is diſhonoured : where Chriſt is away, God is away ; for, *God is in Chriſt.* And, Oh ! is it not too evident that God is away from our nobility, when Chriſt is diſowned, and diſhonoured, and diſregarded among them ? That God is away from the commonalty and generality of people, when Chriſt is ſo little known and loved ? God is not to be found among *Arians ;* why ? They rob Chriſt of his ſupreme Deity, and eternal Godhead. God is not to be found among *Arminians ;* why ? They ſpoil Chriſt of the freedom and power of his grace. You need not ſeek God among *Papiſts ;* why ? Becauſe Chriſt is dethroned there, and the merit of works ſet up in his room. You need not ſeek God among *Legaliſts* and erroneous preachers ; why ? If Chriſt be not in their preaching, God is not there ; though they make mention of Chriſt's name, yet while they preach not the true Chriſt, they preach not the true God.— It is as evident as the ſun-beams, that God is far away from the preſent generation ; becauſe when Chriſt is not there, God is not there. God is not among the *ignorant* and *erroneous ;* becauſe Chriſt, as a Prophet, is not there. God is not among the *ſelf-righteous ;* becauſe Chriſt, as a Prieſt, is not there. God is not among the *wicked* and *profane ;* becauſe Chriſt, as a King, is not there. God is not among theſe that are drowned in *ſenſuality* and *worldly-mindedneſs ;* becauſe Chriſt and his Spirit is not there. God is not among theſe that *deny* there is any *divine impulſe* leading a man to ſuch and ſuch a duty, and leading him on therein ; becauſe it is contrary to Chriſt, who, as the Way and Leader by his Holy Spirit, promiſed to *lead the blind in a way they know not ;* and to *make darkneſs light before them ;* and to be *a voice behind* them, ſaying, *This is the way, walk you in it.* This Spirit is promiſed to be with his ſervants and people in all generations ; *Lo*

I am

I am with you always, even *to the end of the world: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* But,

2. In the light of this truth, we may see who are *false* and *presumptuous dealers* with God; even these that adventure to deal with a God out of Christ. Who deals with God out of Christ? even these that live in unbelief and impenitency; for it is in a way of faith and repentance that all who deal with God in Christ do walk. These that hope all is well, and will be well with them, though yet they have never fled to Christ for refuge, nor know what it is to live upon him by faith: These that hope to atone God by their repenting and reforming, by their future pains and prayers, and never receive the atonement: These that hope in God's mercy, and yet were never afraid of his justice, nor concerned how to have an infinite satisfaction given to infinite justice, by betaking themselves under the covert of the blood of the God-man: these, and many such there are who are presemptuous dealers with God out of Christ, to whom he will be a consuming fire, if they remain there.

3. Hence we may see, who are the *fair* and *honest dealers* with God, even these that so take up God in Christ, and all things in Christ, that they dare not approach to God, but in Christ; they dare not pray to God, but in Christ; they dare not hope in God's mercy, but through Christ; they dare not hope in the promise, but as it is dipped in the blood of Christ; they dare expect nothing, but in Christ: but in and through him and his blood, they come boldly, and hope confidently; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. If they joy in God, it is through Jesus Christ; if they deal with God for pardon, it is through the blood of Christ; if they deal with God for justification, it is through Christ as the Lord their righteousness; if they deal with God for sanctification, it is through Christ as their strength; if they deal with God for grace, it is through Christ as the storehouse of all grace.

4. Hence we may see what are the *marks* by which you

you may know if ever you have got a discovery of God in Christ.

(1.) What sight have you got of God *out* of Christ? They that have seen him in the gospel-glass, have seen him first in the glass of the law. The faith of the law ordinarily goes before the faith of the gospel. Have you got apprehension of him as an angry God, because of your sin; a threatening God, a dishonoured God, a distant God, and so apprehend yourself to be *without God, and without Christ in the world?* Have you got an afflicting sense hereof?

(2.) What apprehension have you got of God for *relieving* you from this misery? If you viewed God in Christ, then you have seen him a reconciled God, a promising God, a glorified God, and a nearly approaching God, coming towards you, flying on wings of grace and mercy, and so with *healing under his wings*, and with balm perfumed with Christ's righteousness, Matth. iv. 2.

(3.) What of God have you seen *in* Christ? Have you seen the greatest glory of God, and all the glory of God in him? Have you seen all the persons of the Godhead glorified, reconciled, satisfied, and well-pleased in him? Have you seen all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling and residing in him? Have you seen more of the glory of God in him, than ever you saw in the sun, moon, and stars? Have you seen the method of salvation through him to be worthy of God, as contributing to the illustration of all the divine attributes, in so much that God, in redeeming Jacob, doth glorify himself in Israel.

(4.) What *of* Christ have you seen God in? Have you seen the glory of God in his face? 2 Cor. iv. 16.; in his person; in his human nature, in his being *God manifested in the flesh?* Have you seen God and his glory in the undertaking of Christ; in the incarnation of Christ; in his doing, dying, rising, ascending, and exaltation to the right-hand of God? Have you seen God and his glory in the intercession of Christ, in his offices, in his names, in his fulness, in his righteousness, in his gospel and promises?

(5.) What

(5.) What way do you deal with God for *bleſſings*? Is it only in him, becauſe it is ſaid, *Men ſhall be bleſſed in him*?—What way do you deal with God for promiſed *privileges*? Is it only in him, in whom the *promiſes are Yea and Amen*?—What way do you deal with him for *pardon*? Is it only in Chriſt, whoſe *blood cleanſeth from all ſin*?—What way do you deal with him for *purification*? Is it only in Chriſt, who *is made of God to us ſanctification*, and has promiſed the Spirit to *take of the things of Chriſt and ſhew them unto us*?—What way do you deal with God in *prayer*? Is it only in the *name of Chriſt*?—What way do you deal with him in *praiſe*? Is it only in Chriſt you offer praiſe as well as prayers?—What way do you deal with God in *believing*? Is it by him you believe in God?—What way do you deal with God in *rejoicing*? Do you *joy in God, through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have received the atonement*?—What way deal you with God in *approaching* to him in any duty? Know you what it is to *have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by this new and living way, which he hath conſecrated thro' the vail of his fleſh*.—What way do you deal with God in the tenor of your *converſation*? Is it ſuch as *becometh the goſpel of Chriſt*? Is it your deſire and endeavour to ſpread the ſavour of his name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

(6.) What *hope* and *expectation* have you in God with reſpect to *future things*?—What hope have you in God with reference to days of *trouble*, *trial*, and *calamity*? Is it only in Chriſt the *Refuge*?—What hope have you in God with reference to *death*? Is it only through Chriſt's taking away the *ſting of death*?—What hope in view of *judgment*? Is it in Chriſt, the *Lord your righteouſneſs*?—What hope of a happy *eternity*? Is it only in Chriſt? *The gift of God is eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*.—Do you take up Chriſt himſelf to be the *true God* and *eternal life*, and that everlaſting glory lies in the everlaſting viſion of the glory of God in Chriſt, and fruition of this God? Again,

5. Since God is in Chriſt, and in him well-pleaſed, then

then hence we may see, and try whether he be well-pleased with *you in him.*

(1.) If he be well-pleased with you in him, then you have sometime seen and found God to be a *displeased* God, and displeased with you, as it is said, Psal. lx. 1. *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.* They that have the faith of God's being well-pleased, have felt his displeasure; and have been put in fear of his wrath because of sin.

(2.) You have seen there was no pleasing of God, nor pacifying of him by any *sacrifice* or *service* of yours. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul?* Micah vi. 6, 8. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, then said I, Lo I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God,* Psalm xl. 6, 7. Heb. x. 5. Nothing could satisfy you but what satisfies God; you could find no rest but in him in whom God rests.

(3.) You will be well-pleased with *Christ*, well-pleased with the *way of salvation* through him and his *righteousness*, even as *God is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake*, because, as it *magnifies the law*, and *makes it honourable;* so *grace reigns through that righteousness to eternal life.* You will be well-pleased to be *in him*, saying, *This is my rest, here will I stay, for I like it well.* Well-pleased to be *like him*, saying, O to be conform to his image! Well-pleased to be *for him*, and upon his side, for his cause, truth, and interest, though all the world should be against him. Well-pleased to be *with him;* to be with him on *earth*, and have fellowship and communion with him; to be with him in *heaven*, and reckon it your chief happiness to be for ever with the Lord. And if you be well-pleased with Christ, you will be ill-pleased with yourself, with your own righteousness, your best duties and performances, *&c.*

(4.) You

(4.) You will be well-pleased with *God* in him: if God be well-pleased with you in Christ, then you will be well-pleased with God in Christ; that is, you will be reconciled to God in him: the good pleasure and love of God in Christ will, according to the measure of your faith of it, kill your displeasure and enmity against God; for, *Faith worketh by love*, even as unbelief worketh by enmity: *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*, Col. i. 21. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*, Eph. ii. 15, 16. Not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but between God and man. You will be well-pleased with God's choice of him; you will be ready to say as the queen of Sheba concerning Solomon, 2 Chron. ix. 8. Well-pleased with God's perfections, as they are in Christ; Well-pleased with God's accepting of Christ and his works, and advancing him to the throne; well-pleased with God's anointing him, and putting all our stock in his hand.

6. Hence we may see what God is to the *unbelieving Christless soul*: as God in Christ is a well-pleased God; so God out of Christ, is all things that are *terrible* and *dreadful*. He is infinite wrath and anger, fire and brimstone, and vengeance; God is the very hell of hell: *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Isa. xxxiii. 14. He is a God preparing flames of indignation, to burn and destroy the soul that remains in that Christless state; *For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it*, Isaiah xxx. 33. See the description of hell, Revel. xxi. 14. it is called *the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*. Again,

7. Since God is in Chriſt, and in him a well-pleaſed God; then hence we may ſee, that Chriſt is the *great theme*, that goſpel miniſters ſhould preach upon. It is true, works and duties ought to be preached in their place: but one great difference between the goſpel and the legal way of preaching is not, that the one preacheth duties, and the other not; but the legal way makes *duties* the foundation of goſpel privileges; whereas the goſpel-way makes *goſpel privileges* the foundation of duty, or Chriſt and his graces the foundation of all holy obedience: the one is for the order of the covenant of works, *Do*, and then *live*; the other for the order of the new covenent, *Live*, and then *do*. You muſt have ſpiritual life in Chriſt before you can do any duty *. When we do not preach Chriſt, we do not preach the true God, nor true obedience unto him. God out of Chriſt is not a well-pleaſed God, but a revenging God: therefore, obedience to God, out of Chriſt, is but rebellion; faith in God, out of Chriſt, is but infidelity; love to God, out of Chriſt, is but enmity, even as the mercy of God out of Chriſt is but fury: *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father*, ſays Chriſt; *We are to confeſs that Jeſus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, ſays the apoſtle. To neglect Chriſt, therefore, is to neglect the Father: and what makes goſpel miniſters harp moſt upon this ſtrain? Even, becauſe, if we could once get people into Chriſt, they could not miſs holineſs. Why? becauſe they could not miſs God himſelf; they would in him find the favour of God, the grace of God, the image of God, which is all in Chriſt, and no where elſe. People may preach the law, and yet miſs the law, and all true obedience to it: but one cannot preach Chriſt, and miſs the law; becauſe, as God is in Chriſt, ſo the law of God is in him, who is *the end of the law for righteouſneſs*, Rom. x. 4.; and in whom, as our ark, the law is kept: the law, as a *covenant*, is in him, as the *Lord our righteouſneſs*, for *juſtification*; the law, as a *rule*, is in him, as the *Lord our ſtrength*, for *ſanctification*;

* The Author handles this point very copiouſly, Vol. II. Serm. XXIII,—XXVII. page 245.

fication: therefore, if we could get people into Chriſt, then we would get them both juſtified and ſanctified. If, therefore, any think, why do you not preach up works and duties more? I will only ſay, if you be offended at the preaching of Chriſt, I fear you are ignorant of works and duties both; yea, and ignorant of God to whom you pretend homage and obedience; for, as God is in Chriſt, ſo he is in none of your works and duties that you perform, while you are out of Chriſt; and you muſt be where God is, that is, in Chriſt, before ever you can perform a duty that God will have any regard unto; *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 4, 5. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. Wo to theſe to whom Chriſt is a ſtumbling-block; but bleſſed are all they that ſhall not be offended in him.

8. Hence we may ſee, where *God*, and *all things* we need, are now to be found; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*, John iii. 35. Where God goes, all things go with him: God is gone into Chriſt; therefore, all things follow him: and ſince God is in Chriſt, and all things with him, then where ſhould we go but where God goes? Where ſhould the fiſh go, but where the water goes? God, the fountain of living waters, is gone into Chriſt, and let us then follow him there: where he loves to dwell, let us love to dwell: where he ſtays, let us ſtay; where he reſts, let us reſt: let us take pleaſure in him, in whom God is well-pleaſed; *To whom ſhall we go?* ſays Peter, *thou haſt the words of eternal life.* O Sirs, to whom ſhould we go, but to him, in whom God is well-pleaſed? To whom ſhould we go, but to him, that hath the eternal God in him, eternal life in him, eternal bleſſings in him; and all things that concern eternal happineſs in him.

My friends, though you had never heard a word of the goſpel before, there is more in this truth than a

whole world is worth, namely, That God is in Chriſt, in him well-pleaſed; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed:* and he, and all things in him, is offered in this goſpel unto you. And, O Sirs, if your heart were open to receive him, happy would you be to eternity. I know not what the joyful ſound of the goſpel is, if it be not the news of God's being in Chriſt, and in him well-pleaſed; and *bleſſed are the people that know it*, and embrace it; and curſed are the people that deſpiſe and undervalue it; and all the people of God muſt ſay AMEN: *How ſhall they eſcape who neglect ſo great ſalvation?* Happineſs and miſery in life, in death, and for ever, is now before you, O hearer of this goſpel. If God be in Chriſt, and in him well-pleaſed; and if this be the goſpel of Chriſt, then God is in it dealing with you, man, woman; with you and each of you, of whatever ſtation or denomination; high or low, rich or poor, young or old. As it is ſaid, when God appeared to Elijah at Horeb, 1 Kings xix. 11,—13. there was a *ſtrong wind;* then there was *an earthquake, but God was not* there; but *after* that, there was *a ſtill ſmall voice*, and God was there: ſo we may ſay, at this day, there are ſtrong winds of temptation, whereby many are made to turn with the wind; but God is not there: there are great earthquakes of confuſion and commotion; but God is not there: and there are fires of diviſion, wrath, and contention; but God is not there. O! where is God then? Why, there is a *ſtill ſmall voice* of the goſpel ſounding in your ears; and if the name of Chriſt be recorded herein, God is there; *My name is in him*, Exod. xx. 24.

May he give proofs of his powerful preſence, by drawing out your heart to him, of whom the Father here proclaims, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.*

SERMON

SERMON CIII*.

Preſent DUTY before approaching DARKNESS.

JER. xiii. 16.

Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs.

THESE words are part of a weeping prophecy, wherein the prophet is attempting to awaken this ſecure and ſtubborn people to *repentance*, from the conſideration of the judgments of God that were coming upon them, of which we read in the preceding part of the chapter: and now he comes to give them good and ſeaſonable *counſel*, verſe 15. *Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud; for the Lord hath ſpoken.* God has paſt his word, and the *decree is gone forth:* and then he calls them to repent, and *give glory to God, before he cauſe darkneſs.*

From the connexion we may obſerve theſe few things.

1. That God, in his moſt ſevere threatenings, and moſt awful providences, aims at mens *repentance*, and returning to him.

2. Theſe who deſpiſe the threatenings of divine wrath, ſhould *ſtay ſtill* and *hear* what the Lord ſays to them; as you may ſee, Prov. i. 25, 26, 27. *But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my*

* This Sermon was preached at Cambuſnethen, on Wedneſday, Auguſt 3d, 1737.; being a FAST-DAY, appointed by the *Aſſociate Preſbytery*, at the earneſt deſire of the SOCIETIES in thoſe bounds. It hath undergone five impreſſions.

reproof;

reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. See also ver. 33. *They that hearken unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil;* whereas these that hearken not, he will *laugh at their calamity. Be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken.*

3. What *hinders* people's hearing, when God speaks either by word or rod? What but pride? *Be not proud;* do not think yourself too good to be taught. Be not scornful, be not wilful, be not secure when God threatens; be not impatient when God strikes: for pride is at the bottom of both.

4. We ought to consider *who speaks* to us by the word and rod: *The Lord hath spoken;* he whose authority and power is irresistible: therefore, bow your stiff necks and stout stomachs, which proceeds from hardness of heart, and a custom of sinning. Consider, might he say, it is not with Jeremiah you have to do; it is not with the minister you have to do; it is with the great God; *Be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken.* When you harden yourself against the word and the rod, you harden yourself against God himself.

Another *counsel* is in the words of my text, *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness.*

Where observe two things; first, an *exhortation:* and then a *motive.* The *exhortation* is, *Give glory to the Lord your God.* Here is a merciful *counsel* God gives them, saying, *Give glory to the Lord;* opening up yet a door of hope to them: and here is a merciful *compellation* he takes to himself, *The Lord your God.* Here we may observe, that God, amidst his threatenings, does not forget that they are his people, and he their God; see Jer. iii. 12, 13, 14. He calls himself *the Lord their God,* that he may shame them for forsaking him, and that he may invite them to return. *Give glory to the Lord your God;* not to your idols, not to other gods. Give him glory by confession of sin, by repentance and reformation. This is a comprehensive duty, containing all other duties in the bosom of it.

We

We have here the *motive* to this duty, *before he cauſe darkneſs*; before he bring ſuch judgments upon you as you ſhall ſee no way of eſcaping. Darkneſs and diſtreſs will be the portion of theſe that repent not, to give God glory. When theſe who, by the fourth vial, were *ſcorched with heat*, repented not, to give glory to God, the next vial filled them with *darkneſs*, Rev. xvi. 9, 10.

The doctrinal obſervation we incline to proſecute from theſe words, is the following.

DOCT. *That it is the duty of a ſinful people to give glory to God, before he cauſe darkneſs: to repent, before he bring judgments upon them.*

We ought to give glory to God *actively*, in a way of duty, before he glorify himſelf *paſſively*, upon us in a way of wrath. This is the great call of God in his word, Iſa. lv. 6, 7. *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* 1 Chron. xvi. 29, 30. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him; worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs. Fear before him all the earth.* Mal. ii. 2. *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings.* Rev. xiv. 7. *Fear God, and give him glory, for the hour of his judgments is come.* Rev. xvi. 9, 10. *And men were ſcorched with heat, and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues; and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt, and his kingdom was full of darkneſs, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.* Pſal. xcvi. 7, 8, 9. *Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and ſtrength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. O*

worſhip

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : fear before him all the earth.

The method we propose for the further illustration of this subject, through divine assistance, shall be as follows.

I. We would speak a little of this glory that is to be given to God, and what it is to *glorify* him.
II. Enquire *how* we are to give him glory, or by what *means* we are to glorify him.
III. What is *imported* in the expression, *Give glory unto the Lord your God.*
IV. Speak somewhat of the *motive* here assigned, *Before he cause darkness.*
V. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. We would speak a little of this *glory* that is to be given to the Lord, and what it is to glorify him.—— God's glory is either essential or declarative. His *essential* glory is the incomprehensible majesty of his Deity. This is incapable of addition or diminution; for, our *heavenly Father is perfect*, and our *goodness extendeth not unto him*, Psal. xvi. 2. His *declarative* glory is, when either he himself, by his word, work, or Spirit, manifests his glory to men or angels; or when they endeavour to declare how glorious he is, by knowing, loving, fearing, serving, obeying, praising, and commending him; by worshipping him, by believing in him; by trusting in him, and depending upon him, and advancing his glory, by their thoughts, words, and actions.

We cannot glorify God, by adding any glory to him. It is his prerogative thus to glorify us; and thus he did in the first creation, when he crowned man with *glory and honour*, Psalm viii. 5.: and thus he does in the second creation and restitution of our lapsed state, when he gives the *beginning* of glory in *regeneration;* for grace is glory in the seed; and glory is but grace in the flower: therefore, we are said to be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*, 2 Corinth. iii. 18.

And

And thus he does in the consummation of our holiness and happiness in heaven; as Christ said, John xvii. 1. *The hour is come; Father, glorify thy Son:* so when the believer's hour is come, the hour of death, God will then glorify him with himself, as verse 5. *Glorify me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* So will believers be glorified in that glory which he prepared for them before the foundation of the world. It is, I say, God's prerogative to glorify us; but in that sense we cannot glorify God, no more than we can create a new Godhead; but our glorifying him is a *declaring* him glorious. We give him glory, when we *ascribe* glory to him. Brute creatures glorify him *passively*, but rational creatures ought to do it *actively*. Wicked men eclipse his declarative glory by sin, which yet is the greater wrong done to themselves than to him: for, as the sun is still full of light in itself, when you see it under an eclipse, by the moon's interposition between us and it, which, indeed, is not so properly an eclipse of the sun and wickedness of men; not by depriving God of any perfection, but they deprive themselves, whose highest end and perfection is to glorify God, and to be made conformable to him ——Thus to glorify God, is to shew forth his glory; and to ascribe glory unto him.

II. The *second* thing I proposed was, To shew, *How* we are to glorify God; or, by what *means* to give him glory?

In general, we are to glorify God with our *whole man*, soul and body; 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in spirit, which are his;* that is, both with the inward and outward man: with the *inward* man, by loving him with the greatest love, studying acquaintance with him, longing after him, delighting in him, fearing his name, and following hard after him: with the *outward* man, and that both with our lips, and with our lives; with our *lips* we ought to pray and praise God, speaking to him, and of him, and for him; our *tongues* should be pencils, to delineate and express the glory of God: many there

are whoſe tongues are but ſpunges, to wipe out and deface his glory, who ſeldom ſpeak of God but in an oath, or make mention of his name but when they curſe or ſwear by it. How like are they to hell already, who have no other uſe of God but to blaſpheme him! and blaſphemy will be their work for ever, if they repent not to give him glory. Alas! how few ſpeak honourably of God in the ſociety they converſe with, though he be ſtill intimately preſent with them, and one of the company? Nay, idle tales and raillery is the buſineſs of their tongues; *They ſpeak vanity every one with his neighbour*, Pſal. xii. 2. *I hearkened and heard, but they ſpoke not aright.*

Again, With our *lives* and *actions* we are to glorify God: Hence, Mat. v. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* John xv. 7. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* There may be many empty talkative profeſſors, who would gladly paſs for *trees of righteouſneſs*: yet bear nothing but leaves, an external ſhew and flouriſhing outſide; theſe they wear for their own glory, but are wholly deficient in that which is moſt conducive to the glory of God, the fruits of the Spirit, and the *fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt, to the praiſe and glory of God*, Phil. i. 11. We are to glorify the divine perfections, by ſeeking conformity to them, ſo as to *be holy as he is holy.* And by performing theſe duties which his attributes oblige us unto; for his incommunicable perfections, ſuch as, infinity, eternity, immutability, *&c.* are inimitable, yet oblige us to duties towards him.

QUEST. *What are the ſpecial duties by which we are called, in the text, to give glory to God?*

ANSW. The context clears they are faith and repentance. 1. *Faith*, verſe 15. *Hear and give ear; for the Lord hath ſpoken.* 2. *Repentance*, and *humbling* ourſelves under his mighty hand; *Be not proud; for the Lord hath ſpoken.* Thus we are called this day to give glory to God.

I ſhall

I shall therefore enquire, 1. What this *faith* is; and how it gives glory to God. 2. What this *repentance* is; and how it gives glory to God.

1*st*, What this *faith* is; and how it gives glory to God. What this *faith* is we may guess from the context; *Hear, and give ear; for the Lord hath spoken.* It is a *hearing* and a *giving ear* to what God speaks in his word. Unbelief stops our ears, like that of the *deaf adder*, that *will not hear the voice of the charmer;* but faith is an opening the ear to hear God himself speaking. By unbelief we hear only what man speaks to us, but by faith we hear and give ear to God, and believe what he says in his threatenings and promises. We give no glory to God till we hear him. and give ear to him by faith. When we hear God speaking in the *law*, then we have the *faith of the law*, and are awakened: and when we hear God speaking in the *gospel*, then we have the *faith of the gospel*, and are quickened. When we truly hear a threatening God, then we believe and fear: and when we truly hear a promising God, then we believe and hope in the mercy of God through Christ. And this is the faith we are called to this day, that we may give glory to God.

QUEST. *How doth faith give* GLORY *to him?*

ANSW. In general, because it answers God's *faithfulness*. It is said of Abraham, *He was strong in the faith, giving glory to God.*

More particularly, saving faith gives glory to God,

1. Because it brings nothing to him but *poverty*, *want*, and *emptiness*. Other graces bring something to him, but faith brings nothing; love brings fire to him; repentance brings tears to him; obedience brings works: but poor faith brings nothing but a bare hand and an empty vessel. Indeed, when we bring any thing to God, we are apt to carry away something of the glory that belongs to him; but faith brings nothing to commend the soul to God; and the poorer any come to God, the more they glorify him.

2. Faith glorifies God; because it seeks *all in him*, and *from him*. As it brings nothing to him, so it ex-

pects every thing from him, ſaying, *All my expectation is from* thee; I have no hope but in thee; all my wants be upon thee.

3. Faith glorifies God, by venturing all upon his *word*. If that word fail me, ſays faith, I am gone; but, *my hope is in thy word*. Faith hings by the girdle of his loins; his faithfulneſs pledged in his word; and his word as Yea and Amen in Chriſt; and this brings more glory to God than all things elſe: *The promiſes are Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20.

4. Faith glorifies God, becauſe all other *acts* of glorifying are only ſo, in ſo far as there is faith in them, and as they ſpring from faith; for, *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. xi. 6. No work can pleaſe God without faith. Take away faith from your prayers, and God gets no glory, nor you any comfort by them, James i. 5, 6, 7. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God*, &c; *but let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering: for, he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind, and toſſed. For, let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* Let faith be ſeparated from your hearing, and God gets no glory by it; yea, *whatſoever is not of faith is ſin.*

2*dly*, What is this *repentance?* And how does it give glory to God? What this *repentance* is, may be taught us in the context, *Be not proud, for the Lord hath ſpoken*: the proud ſoul is the impenitent ſoul; the proud man ſlights and diſdains the word of God, and will not hear nor regard what God ſays; the proud man is the rebellious man, ſaying with Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?* This repentance then is the direct oppoſite of pride: to be truly humble under the mighty hand of God, and thereupon ſubject to God. So that there are two branches of this repentance; *Humiliation* and *Reformation*, and both theſe we are called unto this day; and by both theſe we are to give glory to God.

QUEST. *How doth* HUMILIATION *give glory to God?*

ANSW.

ANSW. 1. By a humble confeſſion of ſin, we give him the glory of his *holineſs*, owning he is a holy God, and we are unholy ſinners, and that he is *of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*, Hab. i. 13.

2. By humiliation, we give him the glory of his *dominion* and *ſovereignty*, while we teſtify our reverence and ſubjection to his laws, as *holy, juſt, and good:* acknowledging his authority. While we ſtand out againſt God, we deny his dominion, but when we ſtoop to him, we acknowledge his ſovereignty over us, and our ſubjection to him.

3. By humiliation, we give him the glory of his *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs*, acknowledging he is righteous in what he does againſt us, Dan. ix. 14. Neh. ix. 33. Pſal. xxii. 3.

4. By humiliation, we give him the glory of his *power*, that he can puniſh us for our ſins, that he has authority and ability ſo to do, Dan. iv. 34, 35. We own he has ability to cruſh us under his feet, and dare not harden ourſelves againſt him.

5. By humiliation, we give him the glory of his *truth* and *veracity* in his threatening; thus old Nineveh, Jonah iii. 5. *They believed God, and proclaimed a faſt;* they believed, that, unleſs they humbled themſelves, the word of the prophet would come to paſs, that threatened their ruin; thus did Joſiah, 2 Kings xxii. 19.

6. By humiliation, we give him the glory of his *patience* and *forbearanee* towards us. When a catalogue of our ſins is preſented to us, and brought forth before our eyes, then we ſtand aſtoniſhed at God's forbearance, Lam. iii. 22. Oh! *it is of the Lord's mercy that we are not conſumed, and becauſe his compaſſions fail not!* —And thus we ſee this part of repentance gives glory to God, and his perfections.

QUEST. *How doth* REFORMATION *give glory to God?*

By *Reformation* I underſtand, not only that *departing from evil*, but that *doing of good*, which flows from that faith and humiliation already ſpoken of. It is a bringing forth fruits of holineſs and righteouſneſs, to the glory

glory of God. And this Reformation gives him glory several ways.

1. It is an owning it our principal honour and happiness to be employed in his *service*, and so a proclaiming, that he is a good and bountiful Master. Men are thereby induced to believe, when we are painful and diligent in his service, that there is a great pleasure in it, and a great reward for it.

2. Holiness and reformation glorifies the power of his *grace*, because it is the effect of his grace. Our hearts being naturally rebellious and disobedient, therefore the power of grace is making them submissive, willing, and obedient: and hence all believers will say, with Paul, *By grace I am what I am.* It is *thro' Christ's strengthening me I can do all things.*

3. By holiness and reformation we glorify and magnify the efficacy of Christ's *death* and *intercession;* the virtue of *his* blood, and the power of *his* death, who *died for us, that we might not live to ourselves but to him.* We thus glorify his fulness: for, if so much grace be imparted to us, as to enable us to bring forth fruit to his glory, what must be in him who is the ocean? The continual supplies of grace tend to raise high thoughts of him.

4. By reformation and holiness we glorify the *faithfulness* of God in making good his promise. God hath promised, *I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my statutes:* when therefore we walk therein, then the faithfulness of God, in making good his promise, is manifested.

5. By reformation and holiness of walk we glorify God, by expressing his *perfections* in our conversation: having the very image of God upon us, and stamped in our life; *Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises,* [or *the* VIRTUES] *of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,* 2 Pet. ii. 9.

6. By reformation and holiness of walk we glorify God, by inducing *other people* to glorify him; *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven,* Mat. v. 16.

v. 16. *Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles, that, whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil doers, they may, by your good works, which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation,* 1 Pet. ii. 12. While others by their evil works, draw people from God, we, by our converſation, ſhould draw them to him.

III. The *third* thing propoſed was, To ſhew the *import* of the expreſſion, *Give glory to the Lord your God.* And here you may obſerve the import of it, 1. With relation to the *act*, GIVING *God glory.* 2. With relation to the *object* to whom it is to be given, *to the* LORD *your* GOD.

1ſt, With relation to the *act*, GIVE *glory to God.* And,

1. It is a *giving*, not *profeſſing* or *promiſing* only, but *giving* glory to God. This giving glory to God doth not ly in reſolution only, for the time to come, or hereafter I will do ſo and ſo; but it is preſent humiliation he calls us to: *Now is the accepted time, before the decree break forth;* before darkneſs come on, give glory to the Lord.

2. It is *giving*, not *extorting;* for, as it ſhould be a preſent humiliation, ſo a voluntary one. Pharaoh was at length humbled, Exod. ix. 16. ſaying, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord your God and againſt you:* but it was extorted. Sparks come naturally from a fire, but not from a flint, unleſs it be ſmitten: then is our humiliation right, when it is natural and voluntary; *Give glory to God.*

3. It is *giving*, and not *commanding others* to do ſo, but *ourſelves giving glory to God:* intimating, that it is not only preſent and voluntary, but proper and perſonal humiliation, Zechariah xii. 10. *Every family apart, and their wives apart;* every perſon apart, every man and woman apart. This is the call of God to us, *Give glory to God.*

4. It is *giving*, and not *lending* for a time, importing an upright, ingenuous, and honeſt humiliation: not *bowing down the head like a bulruſh* for a day, Iſa. lviii. 5.; but it is ſure work, like that mentioned, Neh. ix.

ix. 38. *Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.*

5. It is a *giving*, not a *selling*; importing, that it is a free, not a mercenary humiliation, that the Lord calls for. Some people would give some glory to God, providing they might thereby gain some glory to themselves, like that of Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 13. *I have sinned; but now honour me before the people.* But we are to give glory to God; and take shame to ourselves, and acknowledge as it is, Dan. ix. 8, 9. that *to us belongs confusion of face, because we have sinned: but to the Lord our God belongs mercy and forgivenes:* to him belongs all the glory.

6. Hence it is *giving* and not *parting* stakes, if we may be allowed the expression, with God; importing, it must be full and entire humiliation. Men will confess their moral and not their intellectual sins; the evils that relate to their morals, their drinking and whoredom, and other gross evils: but as to the evils that relate to their principles, they are shy to make acknowledgement of their errors and ignorance. They will hardly own they are fools; but they that give glory to God, and none but these, will confess their total corruption of heart, as well as way.——Thus we see what is imported in these words, as it concerns the act, *Give glory to God.*

2*dly*, We may consider the import of the words, as it relates to the *object; Give glory to the* LORD *your* GOD. It imports,

1. A glorifying him in his *sovereignty*: give glory to the Lord, as he is the Lord of heaven and earth; the Lord of lords; the Lord of angels; the Lord of men and devils; the Lord of our life; the Lord of our breath; the Lord of our time and talents; the Lord of our health and wealth, and enjoyments; the Lord of all that we have and are; the Lord of our house, and land, and children; the Lord disposer of all things, to whose government we ought to submit. We do not give him glory if we not practically acknowledge his Lordship, and own him as our Lord and Sovereign.

2. It

2. It is a glorifying him in his *propriety* in us, as the Lord our God. This is what we are called and commanded to do in the very first command of the law, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*; which requires us to "know and acknowledge God to be the Lord "our God and Redeemer, and to worship and glorify "him accordingly." Never will we be truly humbled, nor give him the glory due to him, unless we come to him as the Lord our God, laying hold on his covenant, that says, *I will be thy God.* The faith of this relation in Christ, is presupposed to our coming; *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings*, Jer. iii. 22. O the faith of this mercy of God in Christ would make us return to him as our own merciful God, saying, *Behold, we come to thee; for thou art the Lord our God.*——Thus much for the import of the expression, *Give glory the Lord your God.* I come now,

IV. To the *fourth* thing proposed, *viz.* To speak a little of the *motive*, namely, *Before he cause darkness.* I shall speak to this head, 1. By considering the several *significations* of darkness in scripture. 2. By offering some *remarks* concerning the darkness here spoken of.

1*st*, I shall consider the several *significations* of *darkness* in scripture.

1. Sometimes *darkness* is put for *sin* in general, and for *Satan's* kingdom; *He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us to the kingdom of his dear Son*, Col. i. 13. The gospel is designed to *open men's eyes* and to bring them *from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts xxvi. 18. Now, when we understand it in this sense, to *give glory to God before he cause darkness*, may have this import, *viz.* before he give up to the power of *sin* and *Satan*, by leaving us altogether under the *dominion* of *sin*. It is true, God is not, and cannot be the author of *sin*, nor can he be properly the cause of it, no more than the *sun* can be the cause of *darkness*; but as when the *sun* withdraws, *darkness* succeeds; so when God departs, *sin* and *Satan* must have the sway.

2. Sometimes *darkneſs* is put for *ignorance* and *blindneſs* of *mind*, *incredulity and unbelief*; John i. 5. *The light ſhines in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehendeth it not.* Matth. iv. 16. *The people that ſat in darkneſs, ſaw great light.* Then the meaning is, in this ſenſe, *Give glory to God*, before he give you up to *judicial blindneſs of mind*, and to *final unbelief*, according to that threatening, Iſa. vi. 10. *Go tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; ſee ye indeed, but perceive not: make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Oh! dreadful judgment!

3. It is put ſometimes for *error* and *impiety*, in oppoſition to truth and holineſs; 1 John i. 5, 6. *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all;* that is, no untruth or unholineſs: and again, *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lye, and do not the truth.* Now, in this ſenſe, the meaning of it is, *Give glory to God*, before he give you up to the *errors of the times*, and to a *ſpirit of deluſion*, like that threatened, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11, 12. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved; for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, to believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.*

4. Sometimes *darkneſs* is put for *ſorrow*, *grief*, and *heavineſs*; Micah vii. 16. *Though I ſit in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light unto me;* that is, when I am overwhelmed with heavineſs and grief, the Lord will be my comfort; as it is ſaid, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs to the upright in heart;* where light and gladneſs ſignify the ſame things, even as darkneſs and heavineſs ſignify the ſame: hence the meaning of the word in this verſe is, *Give glory to God*, before he cauſe *grief and ſorrow* to come upon you, as travail upon a woman.

5. *Darkneſs* is ſometimes put, in ſcripture, for the *loſs of Chriſt* and the *goſpel*, and the blind miſerable *ſtate* that follows thereupon; thus John xii. 35. *Yet a little while*, ſays Chriſt, *and the light is with you; walk while ye*

ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you, verſe 36. *While ye have the light, believe in the light:* then the meaning is, *Give glory to God*, by *believing* and *walking in the light*, before he cauſe ſuch dreadful *darkneſs*, as that of taking away the candleſtick, or removing the goſpel, the means of *grace* and *ſalvation*. This is one of the greateſt plagues and judgments: but ſpiritual judgments, though heavieſt, are generally leaſt felt and underſtood. Therefore,

6. *Darkneſs* is, in ſcripture, ſometimes put for *great afflictions*, and *heavy calamities;* Ezek. xxxii. 8, 9, 10. *I will ſet darkneſs upon thy land, ſaith the Lord*, &c. Joel ii. 2. *The day of the Lord cometh, a day of darkneſs and of gloomineſs, a day of clouds and of thick darkneſs; as the morning ſpread upon the mountains: a great people and a ſtrong, there hath not been ever the like, neither ſhall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations: a fire devoureth before them.* Zeph. i. 14,—17. *The great day of the Lord is near: the mighty man ſhall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and diſtreſs, a day of waſteneſs and deſolation, a day of darkneſs and of gloomineſs, a day of clouds and of thick darkneſs, a day of the trumpet and alarm againſt the fenced cities. And I will bring diſtreſs upon men, that they ſhall walk like blind men, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord; and their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt, and their fleſh as the dung.* Lam. ii. 1, 2. *I am the man that hath ſeen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkneſs, but not into light.* And it is in this ſenſe eſpecially, that ſome take the words of the text; and ſo the meaning is, *Give glory to God*, before he ſend more *heavy diſpenſations, grievous afflictions*, and *terrible calamities;* perſonal, congregational, and national.

7. *Darkneſs* is, in ſcripture, ſometimes put for *death* and the *grave;* Job x. 31. *Before I go whence I ſhall not return, even to the land of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death.* Alſo ver. 22. *A land of darkneſs, as darkneſs itſelf, and the ſhadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkneſs.* Then, *Give glory to God, before he cauſe darkneſs;* that is, before his meſ-

fenger, *death*, be fent to rend foul and body aſſunder; for if you die before you give glory to God, by faith, repentance, humiliation, and renovation of heart and life, ye periſh for ever. Therefore,

8. *Darkneſs* is ſometimes alſo put for *hell*; Jude, verſe 3. *To whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.* Matth. xxv. 30. *Caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* Matth. xxii. 13. *Bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.* Why then, *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs,* or before the *ſhadow of the everlaſting evening* be ſtretched over you, when he will get glory upon you paſſively, thro' eternity, if you do not give him glory actively, now in time.——Here, in the text, it ſeems to be eſpecially meant of the darkneſs of *deſolating judgments* and *calamities*, not excluding any of the reſt mentioned.

2*dly*, The next thing I propoſed, on this fourth general head of method, was, to offer ſome *remarks* upon the darkneſs here ſpoken of.

Remark 1. "That by darkneſs here we are eſpecially, as I have ſaid, to underſtand *affliction and judgment.*" God was to judge and afflict Iſrael, and bring them under a ſeventy years captivity.——And judgments are ſeveral times expreſſed by darkneſs, thus in ſcripture, Pſalm cvii. 10. Joel ii. 2.

Remark 2. "Afflictions are, on *ſeveral accounts*, "compared to darkneſs:" partly, becauſe of their dreadfulneſs; they are frightful, as men are afraid in the dark: and partly becauſe of their dangerouſneſs; there is great danger of ſtumbling in the dark, as in the following part of the verſe, where the text lies; *Before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſs darkneſs.*

Remark 3. "That there are *ſigns* of darkneſs before "it come, or when it is a-coming; ſuch as *heavineſs* "and *drowſineſs*, which ſeize people when the dark "night approaches." Alas! what a ſign of darkneſs is

is the preſent *ſecurity* of our *day?* Men crying, *Peace, peace*, it ſays *ſudden deſtruction is at the door.* Coldneſs ſeizes people in the dark night: and ſo coldneſs of affection towards God and Chriſt, is an evidence of the darkneſs of our day: the ſun down, and the ſtars appearing. Oh! when the *Sun of righteouſneſs* is hid, and only the ſtars appear, only miniſters heard, only their gifts ſeen and diſcerned; what a *darkneſs* is this! When the wild beaſts come abroad, it betokens *darkneſs:* thus, when the church is infeſted with foxes and wolves; ſee to this purpoſe, Acts x. 29, 30. *I know this, that after my departure, ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock, &c.* Song ii. 15. *Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that ſpoil the vines.* See alſo, 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3.

Remark 4. "That *darkneſs* of trouble and wrath "come not upon a church without a *cauſe.*" Give him glory before *he* CAUSE *darkneſs. Afflictions ſprings not out of the duſt:* God owns himſelf the author; *Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it?* There is a concatenation and chain of cauſes, but God is at the top of the chain; he cauſes darkneſs.

Remark 5. "That *ſin* provokes God to cauſe dark-"neſs. *Give glory to God before he cauſe it;* intimating, That the diſhonouring of God by *ſin*, is the procuring cauſe of trouble and darkneſs, though God be the efficient cauſe. The darkneſs of ſin is ours, but the darkneſs of judgment for ſin is the Lord's; *Who gave Jacob to the ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? Haſt not thou, O God, againſt whom we have ſinned?* Iſaiah xlii. 24.

Remark 6. "That God is not willing that darkneſs "come *unawares* upon a church and people, but be-"fore he cauſe darkneſs he warns them; *Give glory* "*to the Lord, before he cauſe darkneſs.*" He is not willing to deſtroy; *As I live, I have not pleaſure in the death of ſinners: Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?*

QUEST. *But when darkneſs is determined, why doth God call ſinners to turn to him, to repent, to give glory to him? What good ſervice will that do, when to them the darkneſs and judgment is determined?*

ANSW.

ANSW. If we give glory to God, then either,

1. It will *prevent* the darkneſs of judgment threatened, as in the caſe of Nineveh, and make the Lord to turn his hand, though he doth not turn his mind.

2. It may *delay* the darkneſs, ſo as there may be peace and truth in our days: or,

3. It may *mitigate* the darkneſs, and make it eaſy, and not ſo terrible: or,

4. It may *ſhorten* the dark night of judgment, as it is ſaid, *For the elect's ſake theſe days ſhall be ſhortened:* or,

5. It may contribute to *ſtrengthen* and *fortify* us for the trial, when it comes, and makes us able to bear it.

6. It will turn the judgment into a *mercy*, and the darkneſs to *light:* for, *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpoſe*, and to them that *give glory to God.* Theſe are the upright ones, of whom it is ſaid, *To the upright there ariſes light in darkneſs.*

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed was, To make *application;* which may be in an uſe of *information*, *trial*, and *exhortation.*

1ſt, We may improve this doctrine for *information.* And if it be ſo, that we are to *give glory to God*, particularly by *faith*, *repentance*, and *humiliation*, *before he cauſe darkneſs*, then we may hence ſee,

1. The excellency of CHRIST, in whom all the glory of God ſhines, and by whom God hath got all the glory that he requires. Hence the ſong of the angels before the incarnation, Iſa. vi. 18. *The whole earth is full of thy glory.* Heaven, the whole heaven was full of it before, but now the whole earth. And hence the ſong of the angels after his incarnation, *Glory to God in the higheſt! on earth peace, and good-will towards men!*

2. Hence ſee the excellency of the *Chriſtian religion*, in that it tends to give glory to the great God, and the excellency of the *goſpel*, that ſhews the way how God may get glory.—On this ſcore the *Popiſh* religion is to be

be rejected, that robs God of his pardoning mercy, aſcribing it to the Pope, as if he had power to pardon; it robs Chriſt of the glory of his righteouſneſs, aſcribing ſo much to the merit of works; and of the glory of his interceſſion, aſcribing it to angels and ſaints.—On this head the *Arminian* doctrine is to be rejected, as robbing Chriſt of the glory of his free grace, in electing from eternity, and effectually calling in time, aſcribing ſo much to man's free-will.—*Socinians* and *Arians* rob Chriſt of the glory of his divine nature, and of the merit and value of his blood, as a ſacrifice ſatisfactory to divine juſtice.

3. Hence ſee the *infinite evil of ſin* that robs God of his glory. Every ſinner is a robber, and every ſin a robbery committed upon God. It is a robbing him of his omniſcience and omnipreſence, as if he did not ſee and was not preſent obſerving; of his juſtice as if he did not regard; of his power, as if he could not puniſh; the language of the ſinner is, *God is altogether ſuch an one as myſelf.*

4. See whence it is, that the great end of the goſpel is to level and bring down *ſelf*, *viz.* becauſe this is the great idol that ſtands oppoſite to God: *If any man will be my diſciple, let him deny himſelf.* Self is the greateſt enemy in the world to the glory of God.—We may bring the two oppoſite poles of heaven together, ſooner than make a man ſerve himſelf, and yet aim at God's glory; *No man can ſerve two maſters.*

5. Darkneſs is to be the *portion* of theſe who give not glory to God. The darkneſs of death and deſtruction will come upon ſuch uſeleſs perſons, as bring in no revenue of glory to the exchequer of heaven. The unprofitable ſervant that hid his talent, was to be bound hand and foot, and caſt into utter darkneſs.

6. Hence, how reproveable theſe, and ſuch like perſons, are,

(1.) Who bring *no glory* to God at all, being quite uſeleſs in the earth. It is not enough for a ſervant to ſay, I did no evil: he is an unprofitable ſervant that does no good. Negative holineſs will do you no good; you muſt not only be able to ſay, I was no drunkard nor ſwearer:

swearer: you must be positively holy, otherwise God gets no glory.

(2.) These are reproveable that *rob* God of his glory; *Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me*, Mal. iii. 8. Thus hypocrites rob him of his omniscience, as if God did not search the heart; unbelief robs him of his faithfulness, as if he were a liar; epicures, gluttons, and drunkards rob him of his glory, for they make their belly their god; covetous people rob him, by making gold their god; hence covetousness is called *idolatry*. Oh! how is he robbed by the Arians, Socinians, and Deists of our day!

(3.) These that arrogate his glory to *themselves*, instead of giving glory to God, they take the glory to themselves. Thus some ascribe the honour of their success in the world to themselves, whereas, Deuter. viii. 18. *It is God that giveth power to get wealth.* Some ascribe to themselves the honour of their duties when assisted; they do all to be seen of men; seeking to themselves the applause of men, and the praise of men more than the praise of God. The oil of vain-glory feeds the lamp of many professors; *Come see my zeal for the Lord of hosts.* The wind of vain-glory hath blown many to hell. Thus the ambitious Hamans and Herods of the earth seek, that men should give them divine honour, and take God's glory to themselves, while they would lord it over the consciences of men, and would have themselves more obeyed than God. Thus many assume to be *lords of God's heritage*, and to have the disposing of their spiritual rights and privileges, such as the *election of ministers* *, which is a privilege belonging to a Christian congregation, and not to any patron whatsoever; *God only is Lord of the conscience.*

2*dly*, The next use we shall make of the doctrine is of *examination*. Well then, you may try if you give God the glory by these two things. 1. There are

* The evil of patronage is laid open, and the Christian people's right to chuse their own pastors clearly asserted, Vol. V. p. 304, 316, 357, 398, 424, 425.

some

ſome things will be burdenſome to you. 2. There are ſome things you will deſire and long for.

[1.] There are ſome things will be *burdenſome* to you; ſuch as theſe following,

1. *Sin*, Becauſe it brings *diſhonour* to God: the ſin of your nature, heart, and life; *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned*, Pſalm li. 6.

2. *Self*; you will be brought to abhor *ſelf*, becauſe it competes with God: Oh! to have the ſingle eye! *Oh! wretched man that I am!*

3. That you cannot glorify God as you *ought*, and that you come ſo far ſhort of glorifying him; this will be your burden: wo is me that I honour him ſo little!

4. The *diſhonour* done to God in the world will be your burden and grief; *I beheld tranſgreſſors and was grieved.* When you ſee God affronted, his name profaned, this will touch you: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.*

[2.] There are ſome things you will *deſire* and *long for*, if you be giving glory to God; ſuch as;

1. You will long to have his *kingdom* eſtabliſhed in the *world*: you will have ſome concern for Zion and for God's honour; *If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning.*

2. You will long to have his kingdom *within you*, and his throne erected in your heart; every thought brought into captivity to his obedience.

3. You will long to have the work of *holineſs* carried on, without reſting in any degree of attainment; *Preſſing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt: The righteous holds on his way.*

4. You will long to be *with him*, to behold his glory; O! when ſhall *the day break, and the ſhadows flee away!* O for the day when I ſhall be *like him*, and *ſee him as he is*; and glorify him to purpoſe!

3dly, The third uſe we make of the doctrine, is for *exhortation*. O Sirs, be exhorted then to *give glory to God, before he cauſe darkneſs*. For motives to perſuade you hereto.

1. Conſider that the glory of God hath been much *darkened* by our ſins, and the ſins of this generation; darkened to ſuch a degree, as may juſtly provoke him to cauſe darkneſs. How hath he been diſhonoured by our forefathers and us! How is he diſhonoured by the groſs infidelity, error, ignorance, and irreligion of the day! by the great contempt and neglect of precious Chriſt, and his glorious goſpel! the woful barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs of ordinances! lukewarmneſs and indifferency in the matters of God! lamentable backſliding and defection from his ways and truth! hypocriſy, carnality, and earthly mindedneſs! all ſeeking their own things, and not the things of Chriſt Jeſus! groſs immorality, curſing, ſwearing, whoredom, drunkenneſs, profanation of God's name and Sabbath! treacherous dealing with God, and contempt of our ſolemn Covenants, National and Perſonal! and departure from covenanted zeal, principles, and practices! How is he diſhonoured by our ſinning againſt ſo much, and ſo many mercies and warnings!

2. Conſider, how the darkneſs of *ſin*, in diſhonouring God, is attended with the darkneſs of *judgment*, portending yet greater darkneſs. How many ſhadows of the evening are ſtretched over us!—The ſhadow of *ſpiritual judgments* and *plagues*; ſuch as blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, ſtupidity, ſecurity, and deadneſs; and the giving up of men to the luſts of their own hearts, in the righteous judgment of God!—The ſhadow of *deſertion*; the Lord viſibly withdrawing his gracious preſence from his ordinances, and the aſſemblies of his ſervants and people!—The ſhadow of *diſſentions* and *diviſions* among miniſters and people: God dividing us in his anger!—The ſhadow of *heavy grievances* upon his church, notwithſtanding of endeavours uſed for her relief, when he goes not forth with our armies!—The viſible *glory* of the church, her doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government, ſadly corrupted with carnal policy, framing the tabernacle of God otherwiſe than according to the pattern ſeen in the mount!—The *inviſible* glory is much withdrawn, that few tokens appear of God's powerful preſence in the

ſanctuary, and a great famine of ſpiritual influence!—What a ſhadow of darkneſs is the *reduction* of the remnant! Iſa. i. 9. *When the good men periſh*, and few faithful paſtors and ſound profeſſors are left! *Help, Lord*, ſays the pſalmiſt, *for the godly man ceaſeth*; few to bear witneſs for God; and when candidates for the miniſtry are lax and latitudinarian in their principles, affecting nothing but new modes of flouriſhing and haranguing, without ſtudying the life, power, and myſteries of the goſpel!

3. Conſider, how much it *concerns* us to *give glory to God*: glorifying of God is the great end of our creation and being; *The Lord made all things for himſelf*: and if all things, then man eſpecially, the maſter-piece of the viſible creation. It is for this end God hath given us rational ſouls and noble faculties, and the means of grace; and all left this end be not obtained. The glorifying of God is the chief end of all his works, *viz.* creation, providence, and redemption. All the other creatures, ſun, moon, and ſtars; yea, and brute beaſts, they all glorify God according to their nature and capacities; and, what are we doing? We depend upon him abſolutely for life and breath, and being every moment: *In him we live, move, and have our being*: and is it not highly reaſonable that we live to him? The glory of God is moſt excellent, his glory is above heaven and earth. His glory ſurpaſſeth the thoughts of men and angels. It is more worth than heaven; more worth than the ſalvation of all men. His glory is dear to him. He hath given many excellent gifts to his children, but his *glory will he not give to another*. And, if his glory be ſo dear to him, ſhould it not be dear to us? And ought we not to promote it? Our not glorifying of God will come to a ſad account: for the ſum of the grand account we are to be called to, is this, What revenue of glory have you brought in to me? And, if God have no glory by us, he will have glory upon us. If you glorify him not actively, you ſhall glorify him paſſively: and, alas! how ſad will their caſe be, who ſhall ſerve for no other end, but to ſet forth the glory of his vindictive juſtice

to all eternity! In a word, it will be our unſpeakable advantage to glorify him, for we ſhall be glorified by him; *Thoſe that honour me, I will honour.* How ſweet will it be in a dying hour, if you could ſay, *Father, I have glorified thee on earth; glorify thou me with thyſelf,* and with the glory thou haſt prepared for me from all eternity.

4. Conſider *whom* it concerns to glorify God; put it not off from you.—Doth it not concern *magiſtrates* to give glory to him, by enacting good laws, and executing them faithfully? See Jer. xiii. 18.—Doth it not concern *miniſters* and *church-officers* to give glory to God, by aſſerting and maintaining the true doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of God's houſe; to *buy truth and not to ſell it,* though it ſhould coſt us our life, as it hath done many worthy miniſters and martyrs.—Doth it not concern *people,* in their private ſtations, to give glory to God, and advance the kingdom of Chriſt Jeſus, and to contribute their mite, though they were never ſo poor and mean, for the building of the tabernacle? As, when it was reared in the wilderneſs, ſome that were able gave gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, ſcarlet, and fine linnen; ſome that were poorer, and unable to give great things, they gave badgers ſkins and goats hair: ſo, according to your ability, you are to give glory to God, and to pray for the coming of his kingdom, when you can do no more.

QUEST. *How ſhall I give him glory before he cauſe darkneſs.*

If the queſtion be about the *means,* I have already ſpoken of this in the doctrinal part; but if the queſtion be about the *power* and *ability,* indeed you cannot give him glory if he do not give you grace; you cannot glorify and ſanctify his name, unleſs he ſanctify your heart; you cannot humble yourſelf for your ſin, unleſs he accompliſh his promiſe to you, ſee Ezekiel xxxvi. 25,—31. *I will ſprinkle you with clean water,* &c. *A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you,* &c. *I will put my Spirit within you;—and then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings*

doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. O Sirs, therefore seek to have the promised blessings and graces of the new covenant, the promised Spirit poured out upon you, that you may humbly confess your sins, aud give glory to God; without this, your confession and humiliation will be defective: and there are four respects wherein *ordinary confessions* are defective. Either we come not *far enough in*, to make *personal* confession; whereas *every family* and *person* should *mourn apart:* or, we go not *far enough down*, to our heart-sins, but stop in outward and general sins: or, we go not *far enough back*, as David, confessing the *sins* of his youth, yea, of his nature: or, we go not *far enough on*, but confess, and then run away to our *sins* again, without having any stamp or impress of confession upon our walk or conversation, and without continuing under a sense of *sin*, as David, *My sin is ever before me;* and without walking softly all our days, as Hezekiah: therefore, that our confession may be of a right stamp, O let us supplicate the *Spirit of all grace*, that we may be in case to *give glory to God.*

And, in order to our having the Spirit, and having grace to glorify God, O let us, through grace, come to Christ, who hath the *Spirit above measure*, and who is the store-house of all grace. By faith and believing in Christ, we give more glory to God, than we can do any otherwise. By being *strong in the faith*, we give *glory to God* in all his attributes, because, in the way of *salvation*, through Christ, all the perfections of God shine gloriously: and therefore, when we believe in Jesus, and close with this way of *salvation*, we give him the glory of them all.—Why, thus we glorify the *wisdom* of God, in laying such a plan of our salvation, as tends to display the *manifold wisdom of God*, in uniting the most distant extremes, and making a *God-man* the centre in whom God and man meet together.—We glorify his *power*, in executing and finishing what Wisdom did so marvellously contrive, and destroying principalities and powers, and saving us, notwithstanding all the mighty oppositions that stand in the way.—Thus

we glorify the *holineſs* of God, ſince in Chriſt, God hath ſhewed his purity, and hatred of ſin, to be ſo great, that *he ſpared not his own Son*, when he only *knew ſin* by *imputation*.—Thus we glorify the *juſtice* of God, in that a ſatisfaction of *infinite value*, hath been yielded by an almighty Redeemer, ſo as thereupon God becomes *juſt in juſtifying them that believe in Jeſus, and declaring his righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſin*.—Thus we glorify the *truth* of God, whoſe faithfulneſs is fully eſtabliſhed, and the truth of all the law-threatenings, in that he hath exacted the puniſhment threatened: and thus Chriſt alſo, at the ſame time, hath ſealed all the promiſes of the *covenant of grace*, in ſo much that they *are all Yea and Amen in him*.—Thus we glorify the *goodneſs* and *mercy* of God. *Goodneſs* appears in its glory, in providing a Redeemer for ſuch as have *deſtroyed themſelves*; and the greateſt bleſſings are beſtowed freely upon the moſt unworthy. *Mercy* appears to the utmoſt, while proviſion is made for bringing ſinners to partake of the happineſs they had forfeited, and *grace reigns through righteouſneſs*: and thus a way is laid out in which juſtice and holineſs ſhould not be injured, and yet grace and mercy eminently exalted.——Here is the moſt rational ſcheme in the world, which contributes to advance, and exalts all the perfections of the great God.

O then, as we would give glory to God, let us come to Chriſt by faith: for, as this way is moſt for God's glory, ſo it is beſt for our behoof. Tell me, O ſinner, have you no *ſins* to be ſaved from? Since you have, O whither ſhould you go but to him, who is the *Lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world?*—Have you not ſouls to be ſaved? Why then, whither ſhould you go, but to the Saviour of ſouls? Is there not a *life* to come? O then, whither ſhould you go but to *him who hath the words of eternal life?* Is there not a *wrath* to come? O then, where ſhould you go but to him that can only *deliver* you *from the wrath to come?* Do you think he is unwilling to receive you? O ſinner, how can that be? If he yielded himſelf into the hands of them that ſought his life, will he with-hold himſelf

himself from the hearts of them that seek his mercy? Was he willing to be taken by the hands of violence? And is he not much more willing to be taken by the hand of faith? Are you destitute of faith? O Sirs, look to him as the *Author of faith.* Though you cannot come to him, make that errand, saying, "Lord, "I cannot come; but I come to thee for grace to "come: O draw me, draw me." Say not, I am unworthy; for if you would have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but hell.

If you say you have a proud heart, a hard heart, a dead heart, a wicked heart. O put these among the rest of your sins, and come to him to be saved from them all.——None ever came to him for a cure, and went away without it. You would find something in yourself; but it is best you find nothing, but what you have reason to be ashamed of, that you may come to Christ for all, so as to glory only in him. Let thy emptiness further thy coming to him for all, instead of hindering thee. Come as thou art; come poor, come needy, come naked, come empty, come wretched; it is his joy and crown to receive thee.

Oh! there is a necessity for thy coming, there is no other *Saviour* but he, and thou perishest: come then, and *give glory to God before he cause darkness;* give glory to God before he cause judgments to fall upon thee. Give glory to God before he take away the candlestick of the gospel. Give glory to him before he take away ministers and sermons. Give glory to him before he lay you on a sick-bed, or a death-bed. Give glory to him before he pronounce that fearful sentence on you, *My spirit shall no more strive with man. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is unjust, let him be unjust still. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.* Give glory to him before he pronounce that final sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels! Give glory to him before he cause darkness.*

5. Consider, that darkness is *threatened.* There are signs of darkness and of judgment a-coming.

(1.) Abound-

(1.) Abounding of all manner of *ſin*. See Hoſ. iv. 1, 2, 3. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Iſrael; for the Lord hath a controverſy with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there is no truth, mercy nor knowledge of God in the land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fiſhes of the ſea, ſhall alſo be taken away.*

(2.) Theſe aggravated ſo much, being againſt *light*, *love*, and *mercy*; ſo that the patience of God is abuſed; Rom. ii. 4, 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the richneſs of his forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath?* Rom. ii. 4, 5.

(3.) When God's patience is not only abuſed, but *affronted*, and *ridiculed*, and *laughed* at; *Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days, ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? For ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.—The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,* &c. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 9, 10.

(4.) When there are *few* to ſtand in the gap; *And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedge and ſtand in the gap before me for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it: but I found none*, Ezekiel xxii. 30.

(5.) When the *righteous* are removed; *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come*, Iſa. lvii. 4.

(6.) When the *goſpel is deſpiſed*, and *Chriſt is rejected* by the generality, it bodes darkneſs; *The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and is wonderful in*

in our eyes. Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, Mat. xxi. 42, 43. O then, *Give glory to God, before he cause darkness.*

And we would advise you to *give him glory* particularly in the six following respects.

1. By *confession* of sin; *Give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to him*, Josh. vii. 19. Confess secret sins in secret: and, when charged in an ecclesiastical way, do not cover sin.

2. By *thanksgiving*; Psalm lxix. 30. *I will praise the name of God with a song: and will magnify him with thanksgiving.* Psalm l. 23. *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.* When we pray, we act like men; when we praise, like angels.

3. By *calling* upon God; *Call on me in the day of trouble; I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me*, Psal. l. 14.

4. By *suffering*, when he calls you to it; *Glorify ye the Lord in the fires*, Isa. xxiv. 15. Dishonour not God then, by complaining: *Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his iniquity?* Remember thou art man, and *man is born to trouble*, Thou art a living man, and that is a mercy; yet in the land of hope. Thou art a sinful man that deservest hell; and a man but suffering punishment for his sin: and let all these be arguments against murmuring.

5. Glorify him by *living to his praise*, living a fruitful life; *Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* Living a holy life; studying to be holy by avoiding sin, and hating it wherever you see it, especially in yourself. You will hate a toad, or serpent wherever you see it; but much more if it be crawling in your own bosom: so here, sin has its residence in the heart; *Out of the heart proceedeth evils*: therefore, abhor that abominable thing which God's holy soul hates. Glorify him by a zealous life, *Contending for the faith*; and by being conscientious in the discharge of relative duties, that the name of God be *not blasphemed*, but that the *doctrine of God be adorned.*

6. Give him glory by living by faith upon the Son of God; you cannot glorify GOD, if you do not glorify CHRIST; *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*, John v. 23. O then, Sirs, give Christ the glory of his name and offices.

[1.] Give Christ the glory of his *name*, by making his name your strong tower. Give him the glory of his name JESUS, by looking to him for salvation. Give him the glory of his name CHRIST, *The anointed*, by looking to him for *the Spirit, the anointing*. Give him the glory of his name, *The Sun of righteousness*, by praying him to arise on you with *healing in his wings*.—Give him the glory of his name, *The Resurrection and the Life*, by looking to him for life to your dead soul.

[2.] Give him the glory of all his *offices*. A man in his office reckons it his honour to be employed, much employed. O then, Sirs, give Christ the glory of his *Prophetical* office, by employing him to teach you, and to dispel the darkness of your mind.—Give him glory as a *Priest*, by employing him to pardon you, and wash you in his blood.—Give him glory as a *King*, by employing him to subdue all your iniquities, mortify all your corruptions, and destroy all your spiritual enemies.—Give him glory as a *Physician*, by employing him to heal all your diseases.—Give him glory as a *Captain*, by employing him to fight all your battles.—Give him glory as a *Treasurer*, by employing him to supply all *your wants out of his fulness*.—Give him glory as an *Agent*, by employing him to do all *your works in you and for you*, saying with the Psalmist, *Do thou for me, for thy name's sake:* and again, Psal. lvii. 2. *I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me*. If you cannot believe, nor employ him, O will you give him glory as the *Author of faith*, by pleading, that he may come and take employment, and work faith in you.—Give him the glory of his *drawing grace*, saying, *Lord draw me, and I will run; turn me, and I will be turned*. Remember you are called to give him glory before he cause darkness. Darkness will come whether you will or not, the darkness of distress,

ſtreſs, the darkneſs of a ſick-bed, or a death-bed, the darkneſs of death itſelf, the darkneſs of a judgment-day. If you would have darkneſs to be light before you, O Sirs, *give him glory before he cauſe darkneſs.* O ſeek to be regenerate; for you cannot pleaſe God while you are in the fleſh: *Who can gather grapes of thorns?* Seek acquaintance with Chriſt and union to him; you cannot glorify God but in Chriſt: be acquainted with the rule whereby we glorify God and enjoy him. Seek to have the word hid in your heart, and particularly to be well acquainted with the goſpel-covenant: plead the promiſes thereof; *For the promiſes are Yea, and Amen,* in Chriſt, *to the glory of God,* 2 Cor. i. 20.

SERMON CIV.

The GREAT RUIN, and the GREAT RELIEF; or, Help from HEAVEN to SELF-DESTROYERS on EARTH *.

HOSEA xiii. 9.

O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.

HOWEVER uneaſy it is for men to hear of their ſin and danger, from the word of God, yet it is neceſſary they hear of both, as long as ſin may be repented of, and danger may be prevented. Here in this chapter, the children of Iſrael are,

1. Reproved and threatened for their *idolatry*, notwithſtanding the proviſion that God made to prevent their falling into it, verſ. 1,—4.

2. They are reproved and threatened for their *wantonneſs*, *pride*, and *luxury*, and other abuſes of their wealth and proſperity, verſ. 5,—8. And though the wrath that is threatened as a-coming upon them, for theſe and other ſins, is very terrible, yet, *in the midſt of wrath, he remembers mercy;* and therefore, in the midſt of words of wrath, he forgets not to intermix words of mercy; *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.*

There are two ſprings of goſpel-repentance; one is, a *true ſenſe of ſin;* and another, *the apprehenſion of the*

* This ſubject was handled in two ſermons. The firſt was preached at Braid Craigs, on Wedneſday, March 22d, 1738; being a day appointed for ſolemn Faſting and Humiliation, by the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY, at the earneſt deſire of the Societies for Prayer, in and about Edinburgh.——The ſecond was delivered on the Sabbath thereafter at Linton. It hath been ſix times printed.

mercy

mercy of God in Christ: both these we are led to in these words. That we may have a *true sense of sin*, we are here taught how we have *destroyed ourselves* by it; that we may have an *apprehension of mercy in Christ*, we are taught, that *in him is our help*.

In these words you may observe two things.

1. The *persons* or *people* to whom God speaks, and how he speaks to them, *O Israel*. It is with affectionate concern, that God deals with sinners for their conviction and conversion.

2. The *thing* he speaks to them, *Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help*. Here is,

(1.) The *spring* of their RUIN, it is of *themselves; O Israel!* THOU *hast destroyed thyself?* or, it hath destroyed THEE, *O Israel!* that is, thy sin and folly, thy own wickedness hath destroyed thee. Wilful sinners are self-destroyers. Obstinate impenitence is the grossest self-murder; thy blood is upon thine own head.

(2.) The *spring* of their RELIEF, *But in* ME *is thy help*. Here is a plank thrown out after shipwreck.—There is help even for self-destroyers in me the *Saviour* and *Salvation*.

The words may be read, *O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself,* FOR *in me is thy help: q. d.* Say not, that I, who thus threaten wrath against thee, have destroyed thee; thy sin hath done it. It is the rebel that destroys himself, though he fall by the sword of his provoked sovereign. Thou art the cause and author of thy own ruin; *For in me is thy help.* I was always able and ready to help thee, and would have certainly saved thee, but thy sins and wickedness carried thee to other helps, which were but lies and vain confidences. I would have helped thee, and healed thee, but thou wouldst not. Thus it is a proof of their destroying themselves. Thou art thy own destroyer; for I am thy helper, that have been offering thee my help, which thou hast put away from thee, and so destroyed thyself by refusing my help, and rebelling against me thy help. In God alone, and not in us, is our help; and therefore, in ourselves alone, and not in God is the cause

of

of our ruin. In our reading, BUT *in me is thy help*, it seems not to run *argumentatively*, but *adversatively*, as the opposite of the former clause of the verse: yet it hath the same import with the other reading, and magnifies not only the power of God, that can help, when things are at the worst, and help these that cannot help themselves; but also the mercy and grace of God that will help these, that have destroyed themselves, and have no will to be helped, but have long refused his help. And, indeed, our case were miserable for ever, if God were not better to us than we are to ourselves.

From the words there are these six general observations we may make.

1. That, as sin is a ruining thing, so it brings *ruin* not only upon persons, but upon nations and churches that are guilty; *O Israel! thou hast* DESTROYED *thyself.*

2. God's dealing with men for their conviction is very home and close; *O Israel!* THOU *hast destroyed thyself:* and as God, when he makes conviction particular, and persons make close application, thou *man*, thou *woman* hast done so and so, and destroyed thyself by thy sin; so he wills *nations*, and *churches*, and *cities* to be convinced and humbled for their particular sin and guilt; *O* ISRAEL! *thou hast destroyed thyself.*

3. God's method of grace toward self-destroying sinners, having once discovered their sin, is next to reveal his thougnts of *love:* his words are a proper fence against two ruining extremes, presumption and despair. To prevent presumptions, he says, *O Israel! thou hast* DESTROYED *thyself:* to prevent despair, he adds, *But in me is thy* HELP. With the same breath he tells us of the ruin and of the remedy; and, with the same hand, reaches the blow and the blessing; or, gives the wound and the cure.

4. Such is the unspeakable mercy of God, that he hath more *pity* and *kindness* for *us* than we have for *ourselves.* Our unnatural cruelty to ourselves is as the foil to set forth the riches of God's mercy: *When no*

eye

eye pitieth thee; no, not thine own eyes, *I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, Live,* Ezek. xvi. 5, 6. When thou waſt in thy blood, wallowing in thy own blood, and hadſt brought thy blood upon thy own head, then I pitied thee. Men uſually ſay, if a man will be wilful, let him be ſo, but God ſays, I will pity him.

5. Nothing ruins ſinners ſo much as their *ſlighting the mercy of God,* their oppoſing his offer, and refuſing his help. As God offers his help, which he hath laid upon One that is mighty, inſomuch, that the cauſe of our deſtruction is not in God, but in ourſelves; ſo the chief thing, by which we ruin and deſtroy ourſelves, is our refuſing God's help, rejecting his Chriſt, in ſeeking help and happineſs elſewhere than in him; *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.* And thou haſt rejected me, and run away to creature-helps, and creature-ſupports, and creature-comforts, and forſaken me the fountain of living waters.

6. The ſixth obſervation we make from the words, is, what we ſhall ſpeak to, and it is this; *That as man's ruin and deſtruction is only of himſelf, and his own ſin; ſo his relief and deliverance is only owing to God, and his ſovereign grace and mercy.—O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.*

This text and doctrine is a tree which hath two branches. I ſhall endeavour therefore, *Firſt,* To conſider the former branch, *viz. That man's ruin and deſtruction is only of himſelf, and his own ſinfulneſs;* and what fruit may be gathered from this branch of truth for our uſe and improvement ſuitable to the deſign of the day. *Secondly,* I ſhall go on to the other branch of the text and doctrine, namely, *That our relief and deliverance is owing only to God, and his ſovereign mercy;* and conſider what fruitful leſſons may be gathered thence for our uſe and improvement thereof.

Firſt then, *That man's ruin and deſtruction is only of himſelf, and his own ſinfulneſs.* This is plain from ſcripture; Jer. ii. 17, 19. *Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf,*

thyself, in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *Say unto them, As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Again, Mat. xxiii. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate.* For further clearing of this, I offer theſe following propoſitions.

The *firſt* propoſition is, "That ſin is a *killing* and "*deſtroying* thing." Death and deſtruction came in by this door; *The wages of ſin is death,* Rom. vi. 23. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned,* Rom. v. 12. It wounded and ſlew our firſt parents in paradiſe: it deſtroyed them, *firſt,* as to the *peace of their conſcience:* for it made them *hide themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God amongſt the trees of the garden,* Gen. iii. 8. It deſtroyed them, *next,* as to the *ſtate of their ſouls*; for it made them both *legally* dead, under the law-ſentence, and ſo liable to eternal death; and *ſpiritually* dead, under the power of ſin, Eph. ii. 1. according to that threatening, Geneſis ii. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* And *laſtly,* it deſtroyed them as to the *life of their body:* for preſently became mortal, ſubject to all outward miſeries, which are a temporal death, and to the diſſolution of ſoul and body, which is natural death: and, at laſt, dropped their body into the duſt, according to that, Gen. iii. 19. *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.* As their ſin deſtroyed themſelves, ſo it did their poſterity; and their ſinning poſterity deſtroy themſelves by their own ſin. Thus every particular ſinner

sinner is a *self-destroyer*.—The *slothful* man is said to be his own murderer; Proverbs vi. 32. *The desire of the slothful killeth him.*——The *adulterer* is his own murderer; Prov. vi. 32. *Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doth it, destroyeth his own soul.*—The *drunkard* is his own murderer; Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. *Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babling? who hath wounds without cause?* and, *who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine.* How sweetly soever it go down, at last, *It bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.*—The *extortioner* is his own murderer: he *heaps up treasures of vengeance for himself*, Jam. v. 3, 4.—The *voluptuous*, the *wanton debauchee* is his own murderer; Jam. v. 5. *Ye have lived in pleasures on the earth, and been wanton;* then it follows, *Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. They that make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*, they but nourish themselves for the day of slaughter.—The *false prophet* and the *false teacher* murders his own soul, as well as the souls of others. Hence such are said to *bring upon themselves swift destruction; many following their pernicious ways;* their *judgment, now of a long time, lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not*, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. In a word, *all impenitent sinners* are said to *treasure up wrath* to themselves *against the day of wrath*, and the *revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, Rom. ii. 5.——All this says, that sin is a killing thing, and sinners are self murderers and self-destroyers: and it cannot be otherwise, because *sin is a transgression of the law*, and the transgressors of the law are liable to temporal judgments here, and eternal hereafter; *Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*, James i. 15.

The *second* proposition is, "That as sin is a hurtful "and destructive thing, so the destruction it makes is "very *extensive*." Sin destroys and abuses every thing; it makes an universal abuse: no wonder, for it is an abusing of God; and, if it could, would destroy him: therefore we call it *Deicide*. It would pull GOD out of his throne; it abuses his authority, interposed in his

law; it abuſes his juſtice, as if he would not puniſh; and abuſes his power, as if he could not: it is an abuſe of his wiſdom, as if his law were not right and reaſonable; an abuſe of his knowledge and omniſcience, as if he did not ſee and obſerve: it is an abuſe of his long-ſuffering, patience, and forbearance; an abuſe of his ſparing mercy and kindneſs: and when it abuſes God, the chief good, it muſt abuſe every thing. It is an abuſe of his threatenings, as if they were not to be feared; and an abuſe of his promiſes, as if they were not to be regarded: it is an abuſe of his holineſs; a direct contrariety to his nature and will: it is an attempt upon his being; *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God:* he wiſhes there were none.—Sin is an abuſe of CHRIST; it is a refuſing and rejecting of him; an abuſe of his perſon, natures, and offices: it is an abuſe of his death, his blood, his righteouſneſs: a neglecting of the *great Saviour*, and the *great Salvation.*—Sin is an abuſe of the SPIRIT: it is a *reſiſting of the Spirit;* a *quenching of the Spirit;* a *vexing of the Spirit;* a doing *deſpite unto the Spirit of God.* It is ſuch an univerſal abuſe of GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, that, no wonder, they that ſee ſin with the Pſalmiſt, cry out with him, ſaying, *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight*, &c. Pſalm li. 4.

When ſin thus abuſes the God of heaven, no wonder, that it abuſe man upon earth. Your ſin, man, woman, is an abuſe of your rational ſoul, which is capable of *glorious enjoyment in heaven:* but by ſin it grovels on earth among the duſt, wallows in a filthy kennel. Sin is an abuſe of the *body*, which ſhould be the *temple of the Holy Ghoſt*, it becomes thereby the temple of the *devil.*—Sin deſtroys the very body: it is an abuſe and deſtruction of time, that precious time that ſhould be ſpent in preparing for eternity. It is an abuſe and deſtruction of health and ſtrength; God lends you health and ſtrength, and you employ them againſt God; yea, *ſtrangers*, as the prophet ſays, Hoſea vii. 9. or *ſtrange gods have devoured* their *ſtrength:* it may be, *ſtrange women, ſtrange luſts, ſtrange lovers, devour* your *ſtrength.*

—Sin

—Sin is an abuſe and deſtruction of wealth, riches, and worldly proſperity. God, as it were, hires the wealthy to be dutiful to him; but Jeſhurun-like, *they kick againſt him, when they wax fat;* Deut. xxxii. 15. Jer. v. 7, 9. *When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by troops in the harlots houſes,* &c. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* Thus it was an aggravation of Iſrael's ſin; *they gave all to Baal, all to their luſts: She did not know, that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her ſilver and gold, which they prepared for Baal,* Hoſea ii. 8. Some give all the ſilver and gold that God hath given them, yea, more than they can well ſpare, to their profane diverſions, idle, vain, and wanton amuſements, lewd and wicked practices.—Again, ſin is an abuſe of warnings, afflictions, and judgments. It is an abuſe of light and knowledge: it is a croſſing of the light of nature and of ſcripture both. Men cannot ſin at ſo cheap a rate, as in the days of *popiſh* darkneſs, when the ſcriptures were locked up in an unknown tongue; *If I had not come and ſpoken to them, they had not had ſin; but now, they have no cloak for their ſin.*—In a word, ſin is an abuſe of the word, the preached word, the written word: it makes men wreſt the ſcriptures to their own deſtruction: to impugn the neceſſity of divine revelation, and turn Deiſts, Arians, Atheiſts, and incarnate devils. It is an abuſe and deſtructions of wit, reaſon, talents, ſermons, Sabbaths, and every thing.

The *third* propoſition is, "That this certain and "univerſal deſtruction that ſin works, is *gradual.*"—Sin deſtroys them like a conſumption by degrees; though it brings *ſudden* and *ſurpriſing deſtruction* at laſt, 1 Theſſ. v. 3. yet it brings the *heavieſt deſtruction* by ſeveral ſteps; *He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy,* Prov. xxix. 1. We uſe to ſay, *Nemo repentè fit turpiſſimus;* "None inſtantly become moſt flagitious:" men come not to the utmoſt of vileneſs, but by degrees.

James i. 15. *When luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* In nature corrupted, there remains ſome ſparkles of *divine light*, ſome bridles to reſtrain black and bloody, foul and abominable ſins, *viz. fear* and *ſhame*, the ſpies of the *natural conſcience*; theſe muſt be abated by little and little, before a man grow impudent in ſin, declaring it as Sodom. The perſon that hath got ſome *Chriſtian education*, he *firſt*, perhaps grows out of conceit with *religious duties*, and neglects to perform them: *then* he begins to wiſh there were no precept or injunction to ſuch duties; *next*, he falls a queſtioning, whether there be ſuch a heaven or hell, as preachers hold out to him? Then he begins to pick up all the arguments that can make for *Heatheniſm*, and againſt *Chriſtianity*, or *divine revelation*; then he hearkens to nothing that will make againſt him, and chuſes to deal with them that are too weak for him; for he hates the *light*, and is afraid of it: after this, he takes looſe reigns, and joins himſelf with the companies that practiſe wickedneſs, and agree with him in his folly: and then, finally, he laughs and ſcorns at all the miniſters of the word; and now he is come to his ἀκμὴ, his height in wickedneſs. Now, he follows his luſts with greedineſs, reſolving, if he ſhall be damned, he ſhall be damned for ſomething: like theſe, Jerem. xviii. 12. ſaying, *There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.*

Thus there are ſeveral ſteps of Satan's ladder. The man comes firſt to *walk in the counſel of the ungodly*; then *he ſtands in the way of ſinners*; and laſtly, he *ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful*, Pſalm i. 1. Satan leads men up the ſteps of his ladder, till they fall down and break their neck. After temptation is offered, firſt comes approbation in the underſtanding; after that, conſent in the will; after that, comes practice in the affection; after that, cuſtom in the repeated act; then follows, delight in that ſinful way; after this, comes the defence of it, with all the rhetoric hell can invent; after that, comes boldneſs in ſinning with a whore's fore-

head;

head; and, laſt of all, comes ſcorning, and a *drawing iniquity with cords of vanity*, Iſaiah v. 18. Boaſting in wickedneſs, and *glorying in their ſhame.*

Satan acts firſt like a creeping ſerpent, and then like a flying dragon. His firſt requeſt ſeems mannerly and modeſt, as Semiramis deſired of Ninus to reign but one day, and that day to do what ſhe pleaſed; and in that day ſhe cut off his head. Sin deceives men till they be hardened through its deceitfulneſs. It appears, at firſt, but little in the fountain, in the heart and thought; then it bubbles out into a ſtream in evil words; then it increaſes into a river in evil actions; next, it ſwells into a torrent, and overflows all in a long cuſtom, till it drown men in perdition, and thus it gradually deſtroys them.

The *fourth* propoſition is, "That this deſtroying evil "is of *ourſelves*, and our own *obſtinate will.*" Men are apt to charge God fooliſhly, as if he were the author of their *ſin* and *ruin*, though yet he ſolemnly clears himſelf, by oath, from having the leaſt hand in it, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* 2 Peter iii. 9. *He is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* When God's fury breaks forth like fire againſt impenitent ſinners, it is their own hand that kindles it; *Ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which ſhall burn for ever*, Jer. xvii. 4. It was the cry of Sodom's ſins, *that brought down the Almighty in flames of fire upon them.* God doth not deſtroy the ſinner, till the ſinner hath wearied God out of all patience, as it were: and hence he ſays, Jer. xv. 6. *I am weary with repenting; thou haſt forſaken me, ſaith the Lord; thou art gone backward; therefore will I ſtretch forth mine hand againſt thee, and deſtroy thee. I am weary with repenting:* God bears with ſinners, till he can bear no longer; *The Lord could no longer bear;* why? *becauſe of the evil of your doings, and becauſe of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a deſo-*

deſolation, and aſtoniſhment, and a curſe, without an inhabitant, as at this day, Jer. xliv. 22.

And as our *deſtruction* is not of God, far leſs is our *ſin;* it is wholly of *ourſelves*, James i. 13, 14. *Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.* When men break out into *lying, ſtealing, killing, ſwearing, whoring*, and the like, it proceeds from the *luſts that war in their members*, James iv. 1.; and from the *motions of ſin* that *work* there, Rom. vii. 5.: it proceeds from the *corrupt fountain* of the heart, Matth. xv. 18, 19. Chriſt ſays, *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, theft, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies.* Thus Iſa. lix. 17. *Their feet run to evil:* why? whence is that? It follows, *their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity;* and hence, as it is ſaid, verſe 6. *Their works are works of iniquity.*

It was ſaid of the old world what may be ſaid of this, *God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great on the earth:* Why? whence was this? *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. There were *evil motions* continually working in their minds; and hence they became ſo monſtruouſly wicked.

Man's ſin is of *himſelf*, by reaſon of *imbred corruption*, which gives matter, life, and being to every ſin; inſomuch, that were it not for this, neither the ill cuſtoms of the world, nor yet the temptations of Satan could faſten upon us. Hence you ſee our Lord Jeſus, though he lived and converſed in the world with all ſorts of people, yet no allurements thereof could provoke him to ſin. *Satan* alſo, in vain attacked him with all his temptations, but he had not tinder in him to give fire to theſe matches; according as he ſaith himſelf, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*, John xiv. 30. He hath no *corrupt matter* to work upon: he may ſhoot his darts, but they return to his own hurt. Were it not then for the corruption of our ſinful nature, neither the devil nor the world could draw

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us to sin: and Satan knows this well enough; hence he suits his temptations to our natural inclinations.

Now as man's sin is of *himself*, and his ruin of *himself*, so especially it is of his *obstinate will;* John v. 4. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, says Christ. Nothing from without or within, is so much the cause of man's ruin as the *will*. As for the *body*, it is but a *lump of dust*, that cannot act without the *will;* the eye cannot look; the feet cannot walk; the tongue cannot speak without the consent of the will: and as for the other faculties of the soul, all of them are influenced according to the motion of the will.—I find the *ignorance* of the *mind*, attributed to the *obstinacy* of the *will*, 2 Pet. iii. 5. *This they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old.* Men hate the *light*, and will not come to it, lest their deeds be reproved; *Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light.*—Again, the *affections* are under the command of the *will; fear, love, joy, delight, desire* are, as it were, lackies unto this *commanding faculty.*—The *memory* is regulated by the *will;* it remembers only these things best, that the will is most delighted with; and what the will doth not affect, the memory doth not retain.——All the thoughts are under the power of the will: all the imaginations of the soul fix themselves on this or the other object, as the will is pleased and delighted therewith or not.—Thus, nothing without or within is the cause of man's ruin and destruction so much, as the *will*. —It is the *will* that rejects the *word* of God; Proverbs i. 30, 31. *They would have none of my counsel; they despised my reproof, therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way.* It is said, Prov. xi. 5. *The wicked shall fall by their own wickedness.* Psalm lxxxi. 11. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* Mat. xxiii. 37. *I would have gathered you, but ye would not.* Isa. xxx. 15. *For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not.* Jer. vi. 16, 17. *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old*

old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls; but they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet: but they said, We will not hearken. So perverse is the will, and so bent are men upon eternal ruin, that they will do more to escape temporal than eternal danger; more to escape a temporal than eternal fire: yea, they will do more to be damned, than to be saved; and chuse to do any thing, rather than come to Christ the Saviour; and here is the chief ruining sin, *a wilful rejecting the mercy of God, the Christ of God.* Hence men are said to love death; *All that hate me, love death*, Prov. viii. 36.—Hence the question, *Why will ye die?* Ezekiel xviii. 31.

Men's unwillingness to come to Christ for salvation appears by these two things, among many others.

1*st*, They are *naturally* unwilling to come to the outward means of grace; *Thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee*, Psalm l. 17. This hatred of the outward means, saying in effect to the Almighty, *Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job xxi. 14.; and refusing with the prodigal, to return to our Father, till compelled; this *natural hatred*, I say, even of the outward means, is evident from the choice they make of outward things; for example, man, tell me, what *place* do you chuse? Is it not natural to you that are *ungodly*, to chuse to be in any place, rather than where the *gospel* is powerfully dispensed; You chuse the *tavern*, rather than the *temple*; the place of vanity and foolry, rather than the place of ordinances and divine worship, unless it be, when you come to hear a sermon for your diversion; and so for feeding some lust or other, not for food and edification to your soul.—Tell me also, what *family* do you chuse? Such as have the disposing of themselves had rather be in a family, where there is nothing but profaneness and wantonness, than in such where the fear of God is taught, and where God is duly worshipped, morning and evening—Again, what *service* do you chuse? Some had rather undergo any drudgery, than be employed in spiritual worship. "Nay, you may "take

"take the carnal man, *says one*, and tie him to a ſtake, "and kill him with praying and preaching."—What *delight* do you chuſe? Are they not rather any vain, carnal delights, than in divine and ſpiritual things?—What *books* do you chuſe? Would you not, many times, rather read any wild romance, than ſit down and ſearch the ſcriptures? Any book rather than the book of God.—And, in a word, what *company* do you chuſe? Is it not any carnal company, rather than the company of the godly? Any diverting or dedauched company, rather than ſpiritual and edifying company? He that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked. Any converſation, or communication is choſen, rather than ſuch as is inſtructive in religion. If any would attempt this in ſome companies, they would but expoſe themſelves to be flouted as unpolite and unfaſhionable, in this profane age.—If conſcience anſwer to theſe, and the like queſtions, it will bear witneſs to this truth, that men are naturally unwilling to ſubmit to the outward means of grace.

2*dly*, It appears from this, that when men are under the means, they are unwilling to be *wrought upon* by theſe means; both unwilling to be enlightened, and unwilling to be drawn.

(1.) They are unwilling to be *enlightened*, and *hate the light*, John iii. 20. Thus doth the preſent generation *hate the light*, of a teſtimony for truth, and againſt their defections, as Amaziah, the prieſt of Bethel, hated the plainneſs of Amos, ſaying, *The land is not able to bear with all his words*, Amos vii. 10.

This unwillingneſs to be enlightened is plain,

1. Becauſe they *ſhut their eyes*, againſt the light, and will think well of themſelves, whatever wickedneſs be charged upon them, or whatever ſin be ſhewed them.

2. If they cannot keep out the light; yet they let it in by *halves*, uſing all arts to diminiſh their guilt, to leſſen their ſin, that ſo they may have the more favourable opinion of themſelves; they will put the blame upon ſome other, if it be poſſible, as Adam upon Eve, and ſhe upon the ſerpent.

3. If the light hath ſo far entered, that the man ſees himſelf a miſerable creature, then he does what he can to deliver himſelf from the *power of conviction*, and the *ſenſe of ſin* : nay, if he get his corrupt will, it ſhall neither ſtay ſo long with him, nor work ſo powerfully on him, as to oblige him to come to Chriſt.

4. When conviction hath ſo far prevailed with him, as that he hath ſome thoughts of coming to Chriſt, yet then he delays, and puts it off, through the power of remaining averſion and emnity ; it is not yet time ; and thus ſome delay to their eternal ruin.

5. If light come yet a further ſtep, to make him judge he is in danger of periſhing for ever, if he come not to Chriſt preſently ; yet, if God ſuffer his preſent fear to abate, then his reſolution abates alſo, and he *returns to his folly*.

6. If his fear return more ſtrongly upon him, ſo that he hath no reſt nor quiet, yet how unwilling is he to come to Chriſt wholly ? If he get not a farther touch of divine power, he remains but half willing. He would have Chriſt for his Saviour to deliver him from hell, not for his Lord to *reign over him*, and deliver him from ſin.——Thus men are unwilling to be enlightened, and averſe from letting in all the light.

(2.) Though enlightened, yet they may be unwilling to be *drawn* to Chriſt : and hence reſiſt many ſtroaks, and common motions of God's Spirit. Thus a man may have much, and long experience of the *bitterneſs of ſin* ; and yet be unwilling to come to Chriſt, and be ſaved from it.—He may not only know that ſin hath done him much *miſchief*, but that it will do him much more ; and yet be unwilling to come to Chriſt. —He may have in his eye the *precious promiſes* of glorious things to be obtained in a way of coming to Chriſt, and have ſome comfortable feeling of theſe things, even a *taſte of the powers of the world to come*, and *receive the word with joy* ; and yet be unwilling to come to Chriſt, —Further, God may ſet before him the *dreadful threatenings* of eternal death and wrath, yea, and he may have ſome foretaſte of the *wrath to come*, like Cain and Judas ; and yet, if God leave him there, he

he remains unwilling to come to Chriſt, and periſhes for ever.

People may be converted to ſome general regard for religion, and yet be heart-enemies to *the power of godlineſs*, having a direct enmity againſt religion, in the *height, and depth, and length, and breadth* of it.—Enemies to the *height* of it, or to a high profeſſion, eſpecially in a time wherein it may be dangerous to confeſs Chriſt openly before the world. They reckon this were but to expoſe themſelves.—Enemies to the *depth* of religion, and to the myſtery thereof: they are not for wading into the depth of it, but only for ſtepping about the ſkirt, the hem, the outſide of it.—Enemies to the *length* of it. The hypocrite will not *always call upon God.* What! to be always watching, conſtantly praying; this is intolerable.—Enemies to the *breadth* of it, as it extends to their thoughts, words, and actions, to all times, places, and companies: this is intolerable alſo.——Thus men diſcover their hatred of religion, who yet have no will to be thought irreligious; and ſo men wilfully deſtroy themſelves.

I propoſed to *apply* or gather ſome fruits from this branch of the text. Many leſſons may be hence learned: I ſhall therefore, from what I have ſaid, deduce a few things for *information*, and *humiliation.*

1*ſt*, For *information.* Hence we may learn the following ſix particulars.

1. What a forlorn *condition* the fall of Adam hath brought us into! We have run away from God, and will not be called back to him. Men are become ſo mad and diſtracted, as to chuſe death, and to be in in love with ſin, our mortal enemy; *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs.* None are greater enemies to ſinners than themſelves; they are their own murderers, butchers, and executioners. They will be away to the devil, to their ſins, to their luſts; their own feet carry them to hell; the Bible calls them *dogs* and *ſwine*, becauſe they run as dogs to the vomit, and as ſwine to the puddle.

2. Hence see, that it is no easy matter to *convert* a sinner. True converts had good reason to give God the glory of their conversion; for, *He that hath wrought them to the self-same thing is God.* No thanks to free-will. Let the Arminians try what hand they can make of it. Man had once free-will to good and evil both, in a state of innocence; but now, in his corrupt state, he hath no free-will but to evil. He hath a heart full of *enmity against God*, and against all the means of his own salvation.

3. Hence learn, whom sinners have to blame for their ruin, and how vain their shifts and excuses for their sin are, since it is such a dangerous and destructive thing. Call no sin little, when *the wages of the least sin is death* and destruction. You may put what name you will upon sin, and call drunkenness, good fellowship; and pride, gallantry; and covetousness, good husbandry, or frugality; but so many sins, so many wounds you give your poor soul. What pleasure or profit can be in that which will be bitterness in the end; that is honey in the mouth and poison in the belly?

4. Hence see how *inexcusable sinners* are, when God *arises to judgment.* Since they wilfully destroy themselves, *every mouth shall be stopped.* God offers them salvation; they will not have it. God will *be just when he judges;* for sinners reap the *wages of their own works;* and the sinner's conscience will eternally torment him. If now they are their own murderers, is it a wonder they shall afterwards be their own tormentors? Tho' now they do their best to lull conscience asleep; yet it will waken upon them, and charge them for ever with their own ruin. This will be a never-dying worm in their breast. How much are they to be pitied, when, instead of pitying themselves, they are putting hands to themselves, by their own desperate wickedness.

5. See how little reason sinners have to be *jocund* and *merry*, in a course of sin. Do you see the wicked mockers of God and religion, how they are dancing towards *the chambers of death?* Alas! does self-murder deserve a song of triumph? Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. *As a mad*

mad man who caſteth fire-brands, arrows and death; ſo is the man that deceives his neighbour, and ſaith, Am not I in ſport? Ah! what mad men are theſe that are deceiving and deſtroying themſelves, and ſaying, *Am not I in ſport?* It is a ſtrange counſel that Solomon, after the ſad experience he had of his own folly, gave to the young man, Eccl. xi. 9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment.* Here is a *comedy* in the firſt part of the verſe; but a *tragedy* in the laſt part of it. When iniquity hath played her part, vengeance leaps upon the ſtage; *Rejoice, O young man!* Why? this is a brave allowance. Well, but remember the judgment to come; *q. d.* take thy pleaſure, but conſider thy doom; ſin on, if thou dareſt. The comedy is ſhort, but the tragedy is long. Put the *rejoice* and the *remember* together, and chuſe, whether you will *rejoice* or *remember?* Whether you will take your ſhort heaven now, or your long hell hereafter? Whether you will chuſe the pleaſures of ſin now, which cannot look death and judgment in the face without being damped; or the pleaſures of *religion* with all the tribulation that may attend it; that can look upon death and judgment with joy? Ah! poor pleaſures! that cannot ſtand a ſerious thought of death and judgment. Remember, that *for all theſe things;* why? the Judge ſets down all upon the table of remembrance; *item*, for your drunkenneſs; *item*, for your whoredom; *item*, for ſwearing; *item*, for Sabbath-breaking; *item*, for mocking, and a thouſand things; *For all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment.* What a fair thread have you ſpun, that muſt anſwer for all? Who yet are not able to anſwer for one. *Rejoice*, but *remember;* oh! here is a ſad *but*, that ſpoils all the ſport. A guilty conſcience cannot abide to hear of judgment; becauſe then the ſinner hears his own condemnation.

Therefore, ſinner, laugh at leiſure, leſt God *laugh* next at you and your *deſtruction*, according to Prov. i. 24, 25, 26. Some *laugh* at the *word*, which is yet fulfilling

filling upon them; for it says, *There shall be in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?* They esteem no more of his threatenings denounced in the preached *word*, than of flashes of lightening in a theatre, or thunder in a stage-play. But *death* and an awful *tribunal* will be found no matter of sport; and the more any fear the threatened wrath of God, the less shall they feel; *To this man will I look, even to him that trembles at my word:* but the less you *fear*, the more shall you *feel;* Psalm xc. 11. *Who knoweth the power of* thine *anger*? *even according to* his *fear, so is* his *wrath.*

6. Hence we may learn, what it is that *ruins famous churches; O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself.* What brought *desolation* upon them, but their own *sin?* And particularly, their *wilful departure* from God, and refusing *help*, his *offered salvation.* Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. *My people would not hearken to my voice, Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust; and they walked in their own counsels.* Matthew xxiii. 37, 38. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would* I have done it? but *ye would not, Behold, your house is left to you desolate!* It is left empty; empty of all its multitude, that use to come to solemn feasts, Lam. i. 4.; empty of *pure ordinances*, though once the city of our *solemnities;* empty of powerful influences of my Spirit, and wo to you, when I depart; empty of diligent labourers and faithful preachers, having, instead of *ministers*, seducers; instead of *pastors*, impostors; instead of *labourers*, loiterers; *Behold, your house is left to you desolate:* it is left *to you*, being left of God, it is yielded up to you. *Churches* and *cities* left and deserted of God, are yielded up to the worst of sinners; and what will they do with *holy things*, or *holy places*, and *holy ordinances*, and *holy Sabbaths*, when left to them, and God

God himself is gone? How will they profane his *Sabbaths*, pollute his *ordinances*, destroy the *doctrine*, *worship*, *discipline*, and *government* of his *house*, break down the *carved work*; and turn the *house of prayer to a den of thieves? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

2*dly*, This subject may be improven for *conviction* and *humiliation*. Ought we not this day to be *humbled* before God, and *convinced*, that this is the case with us. —And that God is saying to us, as he did to Israel, O Scotland, *thou hast destroyed thyself!* O Edinburgh, *thou hast destroyed thyself!* O sinner, *thou hast destroyed thyself!* Oh! let ministers and people take with the charge, *Thou hast destroyed thyself:* here, let us *lament*, and be *humbled* before God.

How many ways might we mention, hath Scotland been *destroying itself*, since our *glorious Reformation* from *Popery?* Particularly, by breaking our *National Covenant* with God: we gave our hands solemnly to God, and then departed from him; and gave our hands to the men of the *world*, by *public Resolutions*, to join with them: yea, we dishonoured him by burning our *Covenant* with the King of kings, and giving *sacrilegious homage* to the kings of the earth, as if they had been supreme over all persons, and in all *causes*, *civil* or *ecclesiastic*; by defiling ourselves with many *oaths*, contrary to the *oath* of God, and accepting *Indulgencies* founded upon that wicked *Supremacy*, assumed over the *house* of God *: by involving ourselves in the guilt of their *blood*, that suffered for the testimony of Jesus, in witnessing for him as King in Zion, in opposition to such as robbed him of his *crown*; by neglecting, at the merciful Revolution, the fairest opportunity of reviving a *covenanted Reformation*, and rebuilding his *house* upon the *right foundation*: but, instead of that, we may say, *We and our forefathers have sinned; we understood not his wonders, nor remembered the multitude of his mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red-sea*, Psalm

* The reader will find the above transactions more fully laid open, Vol. IV. pag. 383, Vol. V. pag. 115, 317.

cvi. 6, 7.; at the very time and place of *deliverance* from *tyranny* and *arbitrary power*.

But, in later times, how have we *deſtroyed ourſelves* more and more? I ſhall mention ſome ſins that *ruin* and *deſtroy churches* and *nations*; and we may conſider, whether or not we have been and are *deſtroying ourſelves* therewith.

1. *Lukewarmneſs* and *indifference* in *religion* is a deſolating and deſtroying ſin; *Becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth*, Revel. iii. 15. This made God caſt off that church of Laodicea; and is not this the ſin of this generation? Interpendent, as it were, and hanging between heaven and hell, between God and Baal; zeal for the kingdom, and cauſe, and honour of Chriſt wearing gradually out.

2. *Apoſtaſy* from God is a deſolating and deſtroying ſin to churches and nations; *Thou haſt left thy firſt love: Remember therefore, from whence thou haſt fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place*, Revel. iii. 4, 5. The *candleſtick* is the *church*; the *ſin* that removes the *candleſtick* is *apoſtaſy*. And are we not chargable in this land with apoſtaſy in *judgment*, leaving the *ancient truth* of God for new *errors*; *new gods*, but old *devils*, Deut. xxxii. 17, 18.: new lights, but damnable *errors*, and *doctrines of devils*; many of theſe tolerated, untouched and uncenſured by the *judicatories* of the *church* †; chargeable with apoſtaſy in *affection*, having *left* our *firſt love*, Jer. ii. 2. *The love of our eſpouſals*, when our land was married to God by *ſolemn Covenant*? With apoſtaſy in *practice* and *converſation*, as many of Chriſt's diſciples left him, when he was apprehended; yea, many who ſeem to run well for a time, they ſit up; they *begin in the Spirit*, and *end in the fleſh*.

3. *Barrenneſs* under the means of *grace*, that God hath been ſome time giving a plentiful allowance of,

† Some of theſe errors, which our Author probably here alludes to, are condeſcended upon, Vol. I. pag. 238. Vol. II. pag 304, 446. Vol. IV. pag. 148.

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of, is another sin that brings desolation and destruction; this is represented by the *curse* denounced upon the *barren fig tree*, Luke xiii. 7. *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground. The ax is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire*, Matth. iii. 10. If under Zion's blessings we bring forth Sodom's blossoms, see what God will do; *I will break up the hedge, and dress it no more, the clouds shall rain no more rain upon it*, &c. Isaiah v. 5, 6.

4. *Union* and *communion* with a *wicked world* is *church-destroying* and *soul-destroying*; for *the companion of fools shall be destroyed.* There are sinful *unions* and *associations*, whereby churches and nations may be destroyed; such was our *incorporating union* with England, upon terms opposite to our *Covenant union* formerly with them; to which may be applied, Psal. cvi. 28, 35, 40. *They joined themselves unto Baal-peor; they were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.* Many a sad lesson have we learned from our neighbours, and many dismal consequences have followed this incorporation.—I designedly enlarge not upon any of these things that are more fully represented in a published *Testimony* among your hands, adopted by you, that have invited us to this day's work here ‡.

5. *Pride* of *privileges* and *confidence* in the *church* and *temple*, like the Jews, that cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these*, Jer. vii. 4. As if an established church could be their security; but, what is the name of the church, when the glory is departed? Is it not their confidence, that the Lord is with them because they are a church, that will secure them: see Mic. iii. 10, 11, 12. *They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord*

‡ The direful consequences that have attended the union of the two kingdoms are laid open in the Act and Testimony, pag. (mihi) 46—49.

among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forest.——Therefore saith the Lord, Zeph. iii. 11. *Thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain.*

6. Gross and cursed *hypocrisy* is another destructive and desolating sin; we see Matth. xxiii. 13,—29. no less than eight *woes* are denounced against *hypocrites*. Hypocrites mock God, and destroy themselves: they profess one thing, and are really some thing else; like the blasphemy of these who said, *they were Jews, and were not, but were the synagogue of Satan*, Revel. ii. 9. They professed to be a true church, and yet were but a church malignant; as if some should profess to be a *true Presbyterian church*, and yet be really *Antichristian*, or *Erastian: O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself*, &c.

7. *Stubbornness* and *incorrigibleness* is a desolating and destructive sin: when neither word nor rod prevail with a people to leave their sin, and return to him, this brings *temple-desolation*, and presages still heavier and heavier judgment: *If, by these things, ye will not be reformed, then will I punish you seven times more;* and yet *seven times more; and I will walk contrary to you*, Lev. xxvi. 23. I have so and so punished you, and *ye have not returned unto me; therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!* Amos vi. 12.

8. *Covenant-breaking* with God is another desolating and destructive sin; in that same chap. Lev. xxvi. 25. *I will bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant.* Such an avenging sword is yet hanging over Britain and Ireland, for *breaking*, *burning*, and *burying* out of mind the *covenant* made between God and our *fathers;* though many say, What have we to do with what our *fathers* did this time hundred year? Well, but see, what God hath a-mind to do, Deut. xxix. 24, 25. after an account of God's covenant with them, 2 Kings xvii. 13, 14, 15, 18.

9. *Ignorance* of GOD, and *profanity* of *life*, which go toge-

together, is a desolating and destructive sin, Hosea iv. 1, 2, 3, 6. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel; the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out; and blood touches blood.* See what a catalogue of profane courses accompanies *ignorance* of God; and what follows, *Therefore shall the land mourn;* and *my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* Here we see, that *profane people*, though they should be never such great *wits*, and have never so much *head-knowledge*, yet they are *ignorant* of God, and their *ignorance destroys* them.

10. Another desolating, church-ruining and destroying sin is, the *rejecting of Christ* from being their Lord and King. Christ will be a sole King, and will have none upon his throne but himself; and when a church rejects him as a King, then he rejects them as a church. This was fearfully exemplified in the Jews, where they said, *We will not have this man to reign over us; and we have no king but Cæsar:* thus, out of their own mouth, they verified Jacob's old prophecy, *That the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet; and therefore Shiloh was now come, the true Messiah was come;* and him they rejected from being king, and therefore he rejected them from being his church. What for a body is that, which wants the head? And what for a church is that, of which the apostle speaks, Colossians ii. 19. *Not holding the head?* Christ is the *head of the body, the church;* but will Christ hold that church as his body, that does not hold him, nor hold only as a church of him as their head and king.

Here it will be expected, I should speak of some late practices by the generality of ministers in Scotland, that were, whatever the profession to the contrary be, a practical disclaiming of the sole headship and supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ over his church. I shall only say, That the general course of

falling in with this Eraſtian act * is ſuch an affront done to our *glorious King Jeſus*, that tho' judicatories ſhould conſpire to bury it in the grave of oblivion, and cover it with the fair maſk of *mutual forbearance* and *brotherly love*; yet, I doubt not, but as it will be remarked to poſterity, as a crowning piece to Scotland's defection at this day, ſo the Lord will reſent it among other injuries done to him, when he comes to plead his controverſy.

The judicatories have been of late refuſing to adopt a teſtimony offered to them, and now publiſhed for God and his truth; and therefore, little wonder, that God hath left them to fall in with theſe open indignities done to the *crown royal* of King Jeſus. And this hath contributed to confirm ſome in the courſe they were led to of teſtifying, in a way of ſeceſſion for them, who had, ſo long time, and by ſo many acts, been ſuppreſſing the truths of God, and oppreſſing the people of God, obtruding HIRELINGS upon reclaiming congregations, and ſo ſcattering the flock of Chriſt, as ſheep without a ſhepherd; and aſſuming a power and authority, contrary to the *warrant* of the *word* †. If theſe and the like are the circumſtances of the judicatories, none need think ſtrange, that ſome have taken the method of teſtifying againſt the defections of the day that now they are upon; nor ought any to reckon

* Our Author here undoubtedly alludes to the affair of one JOHN PORTEOUS, captain of the town guard of Edinburgh, who had been legally condemned to die, for ſeveral murders, committed by him on the populace, at a public execution, where he had the command; but who afterwards, by the influence of ſome great men, obtained a reprive; which ſo incenſed the people, that they roſe up notwithſtanding, and executed him at Edinburgh, Sept. 7th, 1736. The king and parliament reſented this affront very highly; and accordingly framed a moſt ſtrange and extraordinary act to diſcover the actors: and ordered all the miniſters of Scotland to read the ſaid act, in the time of divine ſervice in their churches, every firſt Sabbath of the month, for a whole year, under certain penalties. Though this was a groſs and public profanation of the Lord's day, a proſtituting the pulpit, and a practically giving up with the alone headſhip and ſovereignty of Chriſt over his church; yet the moſt part of the miniſters read this act to the no ſmall grief of many of the godly.

† If the reader inclines to ſee a more ample account of theſe particulars, he may conſult, Vol. I. pag. 238. Vol. II. pag. 149, 466, Vol. IV. p. 148. Vol. V. pag. 304, 317, 357, 395, 396, 425.

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it a *ſchiſmatical* courſe. Though none can juſtify themſelves from being guilty of diſhonour done to their glorious Lord, yet let them bear moſt the charge of *ſchiſm* and *diviſion*, that divide moſt from the head Jeſus Chriſt, and from the *truth*, as it is in him. Let none think theſe are the *dividers*, who are but the ſmalleſt number, taking a different courſe from the reſt ‡. When the whole church turned *Arian*, departed from Chriſt the head, except *Athanaſius*, I have no difficulty in ſaying, they were all *Schiſmaties* but himſelf. Let the true nature of *ſchiſm* be conſidered, and we may then either defy *reproach*; or, as long as the Lord is with us, we may eaſily bear it. We are not good ſoldiers of Chriſt, nor followers of him, if we cannot endure a hiſs for Chriſt, who *endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame* for us; and now is *ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of God as the glorious King of Zion.*

Theſe are ſome of the ſins that deſtroy *nations* and *churches*; I might mention many more: but if we reflect upon theſe, and the deep ſhare we have in them all; may we not receive the conviction offered here, *O Iſrael!* O Scotland! *thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf?* Magiſtrates, miniſters, and people have *deſtroyed themſelves*: ſuch a charge you read of in many places of ſcripture, ſuch as Micah iii. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. Ezekiel xxii. 25,—31.

But ſince, I ſuppoſe, the moſt here preſent are from the adjacent city, we have occaſion alſo to ſay more particularly, O Edinburgh! *thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf*: are not all the deſolating and deſtroying ſins, that I have mentioned already, to be found in THEE, by which thou haſt been, and art *deſtroying thyſelf*? And to theſe may be added ſome other ſins, which I judge they are chargeable with, and ought to be humbled for this day.

Is not *pride*, *idleneſs*, and *fulneſs* of *bread*, that was the iniquity of her ſiſter Sodom, alſo to be found with her? Ezek. xvi. 49. Cities are deſtroyed by *luxury* and *wantonneſs*, when God is calling for mour ing,

‡ Our Author's ſentiments on this point, are more fully expreſſed, Vol. V. pag. 313.

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Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 14. Enquire before the Lord, if this be not the sin of the city? Cities are destroyed by their *oppression* of the *poor*, their *racking* of *rents*, their *injustice*, and *fraudulent dealings* between man and man; *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a man, if there be any that executes judgment, that seeks the truth*, Jer. v. 1.; Intimating, how hard it was to find a truly honest and righteous man, and how exposed the city therefore was unto wrath. Cities are destroyed by neglect of *family-worship*, in reading the word of God, singing the praises of God, and calling on the name of God. If this neglect be the sin of the city, it will be the ruin of it; *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and the families that call not on thy name*, Jer. x. 25. Cities are destroyed by the sin of slighting the *warnings of the word*, despising faithful messengers they have had among them, that gave them fair and faithful warning. Edinburgh hath been privileged with some such from time to time; but the more plain and faithful some of them have been, perhaps, they were the more despised and disparaged.—Jonah preached but one sermon to Nineveh, and they repented; but many a faithful sermon hath Edinburgh heard, and never repented; and, perhaps, they who have dealt with them most faithfully have been treated most contemptuously, even as Paul was called a *pestilent fellow*. The town of Northampton in New England hath not had a long tack of the gospel; yet, as we hear, the gospel there hath done wonders, thro' the out-pouring of the Spirit of God with it. But, what shall we say? We have had the Bible in our own language, and the doctrines of the gospel dispensed for near two hundred years; but with how little effect? How gross our ignorance! how depraved our manners! how little of Christianity in a Christian nation! And what if God be now saying, *My Spirit shall no more strive with man;* it shall no more strive with Edinburgh; it shall no more strive with Scotland? *The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.*

Again,

Again, Cities have been deſtroyed by *murder* and *bloodſhed*; for, *Blood hath a ſtrong cry to heaven for vengeance*, Gen. iv. 10. No doubt, the city hath reaſon to mourn, on this account for much bloodſhed committed therein, and never mourned over; I mean, not only the blood of *infants*, murdered in ſecret; nor do I mean only the blood of *innocents*, not long ago ſuddenly ſlaughtered at the execution of *Wilſon* *, for which the Lord may plead a controverſy with the city, if it hath not been duly purged by public juſtice; far leſs need I here proclaim, what hath been too much proclaimed already to the proſtituting of the pulpit, and the profaning of many a Sabbath-day; but I mean eſpecially, the yet unpurged blood of *martyrs* ſhed at the *Croſs*, and in the *Graſs-market*, in the late times of *tyranny*. This blood hath never yet been duly mourned over by *public humiliation* on that account: and therefore it cries againſt the *city* for vengeance, and againſt the *land*. And, what if God hath ordered, that the pulpits of Scotland ſhould ring ſo many days with the noiſe of the blood of a *murderer*, as a righteous judgment upon them, for neglecting to mention and mourn over the guilt of the blood of *martyrs*, that was ſhed about the ſame place. But,

Again, Cities have deſtroyed themſelves with monſtrous *whoredom* and *adultery*, of which the Lord ſays, Jer. v. 8, 9. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things? and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* If people, at this day, are declaring their ſin as Sodom; if ſtews are tolerated, and works of darkneſs covered, and if church-cenſures and diſcipline be bought away with money †, how provoking to God muſt it be, and how like the *popiſh* practice in their book of *rates*? So much for *whoredom*, ſo much for *adultery*, ſo much for *murder*; and declaring, that no ſuch acts of favour can be granted to the *poor*; enough to invite men to ſin, that

* The perſon's name who was executed between Leith and Edinburgh, where captain Porteous ordered the ſoldiers to fire upon the populace, and killed ſeveral of them. See above p. 448.

† It was alledged, that theſe heinous evils and corrupt practices were prevailing too much in the metropolis.

know

know the price, before-hand, at which they may be abſolved, or free of all *church-cenſure*; if any thing, like this, hath, at any time, taken place among us, *Shall not the Lord viſit for theſe things?*

Again, Cities have deſtroyed themſelves by *Sabbath-breaking*; as you may ſee, Amos viii. 5, 7, 8. *When ſhall the Sabbath be gone*, ſay they, *that we may ſell corn, and ſet out wheat?* &c. *Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwells therein?* Theſe that take their own pleaſures on the Lord's day, kindle his diſpleaſure againſt themſelves, *Who ordered the man that gathered ſticks to be ſtoned to death.*

In a word, Cities have deſtroyed themſelves by their *abuſe* of *plenty*, as here in the context; Hoſ. xiii. 6, 7. *They were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore they have forgotten me: therefore I will be to them as a lion*, &c. like Jeſhurun, that *waxed fat and kicked.*— When the body was ſtuffed up with plenty, the ſoul was puffed up with pride, forgetting God, and abuſing his goodneſs to laſciviouſneſs and wantonneſs, conſuming their time and ſubſtance with *vain ſhows*, *idle aſſemblies*, *plays*, *balls*, and I know not what a multitude of mad amuſements to gratify the fleſh; till their *plenty* be turned into *poverty*; their *wantonneſs*, into *wo* and *miſery*; and their time ſwallowed up in *eternity*. *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf.*

Again, Let *every one* take home the charge; *O ſinner! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf:* as by theſe *ſins* I have mentioned; ſo particularly by thy wilful rejecting of Chriſt, and unwillingneſs to come to him, which may be proven againſt you, partly by your unwillingneſs to ſubmit to the outward means, and partly by your unwillingneſs to be wrought upon by them, as I have ſhewed already: ſo ſtrong is your natural enmity, that if left to yourſelf, you are undone.

Again, let the *godly*, themſelves, take home the charge, and be humbled before God; becauſe, as you are as great ſelf-murderers by nature, as the reſt of the world, ſo even, ſince grace took a dealing with you, ſuch are the remains of that ſelf-diſpoſition, in innumerable inſtances, that it may be ſaid, even to you that

are

are the true Iſrael of God, *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf.* And though God had no other controverſy againſt Scotland, than even the *iniquities of ſons and daughters*, it is enough; their unwatchfulneſs, their untenderneſs, their neglect of a goſpel-converſation, neglect of relative duties; their deteſtable neutrality in the matters of God; their grievous inſenſibility of the diſhonours done to Chriſt; their little love to and ſympathy with one another; their bitterneſs and prejudice againſt one another; their ſelf-ſeeking, and ſelf-pleaſing, and preparing their own houſes, building to themſelves *ceiled houſes, while the houſe of the Lord lies waſte*; their carnal eaſe, when they ſhould be fighting the Lord's battles, and *following him without the camp.* When David would perſuade Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 11. to go to his houſe, and enjoy the lawful pleaſures of his bed, he refuſed it, ſaying, *The ark, and Iſrael, and Judah, abide in tents, and my Lord Joab, and the ſervants of my Lord, encamp in the open fields, and ſhall I go home and eat and drink, and* ly in my bed of eaſe and pleaſure? *As the Lord liveth, I will do no ſuch thing.* This looked like a man truly concerned for the ark and Iſrael of God. Many of us do not ſo much as forbear our unlawful pleaſures of pride and wantonneſs. Tho' *the ark of the Lord abide in tents*, and though the church be going to the wilderneſs, or *encamp in the open fields*, yet many remain loitering in their beds of eaſe, and pleaſure, and ſloth: but God loves not jollity, when he calls for mourning; nor ſloth, when he calls for watching, and appearing for him.

Again, The godly ſometimes have deſtroyed themſelves by their *diviſions* among themſelves. May I not ſay with the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xi 18. *I hear that there are diviſions among you, and I partly believe it?* and we know ſome evident effects of it. But, O my dear friends, what a reproach is it to your *Chriſtian profeſſion*, to hear of praying ſocieties divided againſt *praying ſocieties?* It was obſerved by enemies themſelves, to the commendation of the *primitive Chriſtians*, "Behold! "how they love *one another.*" Alas! how reproachful is it, if the contrary be ſaid of you, Behold, how

they hate one another; how they bite and devour one another. What a miserable thing it is, if in matters that either might be accommodated, or born with, Christians should destroy themselves, and destroy one another? How is our God thus dishonoured, the gospel discredited, religion wounded, and the hands of witnesses for reformation weakened!

In a word, The *children* of God themselves have, at this day, destroyed themselves, by leaving their *first love*, by their carnality in their work and walk, and their *evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God:* by these things they destroy themselves, destroy their peace, destroy their comfort, destroy their assurance, destroy their freedom in coming to God, destroy their name and credit. They destroy their beauty and livelinefs, and provoke God to *write bitter things against them.* Yea, the *children* of grace may, by their uncircumspect walk, provoke their heavenly Father to break them with *breach upon breach*, and to bring heavy stroaks both temporal and spiritual, upon them, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. Let none of God's people therefore say, such and such instruments have destroyed us, ministers and judicatories have destroyed our church-privileges and liberties, and robbed us of our spiritual rights. Whatever truth be in this, that way of speaking looks not like due humiliation before God, for these are but the fruits of God's anger against us for our sin; *Behold thou art wroth, for we have sinned*, Isa. lxiv. 5. It is an angry God that leaves a generation of sinners that are self-destroyers, to be also destroyers of one another; and therefore let us blame ourselves, because we have sinned, and brought on all this destruction upon ourselves. It would look like *kindly humiliation*, if every one were saying, I am the Achan that hath *troubled the camp of Israel;* I am the Jonah that hath raised this storm of wrath; I am the sinner that hath provoked God to leave ministers and judicatories to themselves; and to leave his house desolate; it is I that have provoked him to send the loose, lax, and corrupt ministry here and there through the land; it is I that have provoked him to leave some good ministers

niſters to make ſad defection; for it is poſſible Iſrael's ſins may provoke God to leave a miniſter, as good as *Aaron the ſaint of God*, to *ſet up a golden calf in Horeb*, Let every one of us not only bear the charge, *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf;* but let us take with the charge, ſaying, I am the *perſon* that hath deſtroyed myſelf, and deſtroyed the generation, and my ſin may juſtly provoke him to ſend more heavy deſtruction yet, and terrible deſolation: for if *every ſin* deſerves God's heavy wrath, what may my *aggravated ſins* provoke him to? We never ly open to mercy, or to goſpel-grace, ſo much as when we take with the law-charge, and anſwer to the voice of God, *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; Truth, Lord*, I have deſtroyed myſelf. And if brought to this, then hear and conſider

The *ſecond* branch of the text, *In me is thy help:* importing, that our relief and deliverance is only owing to God, and his ſovereign mercy; *To the Lord our God belongs mercy and forgiveneſs, though we have rebelled againſt him*, Dan. ix. 9. And ſince all have deſtroyed themſelves, none can be ſaved but in a way of free mercy, as God ſays to Moſes, Exod. xxxiii. 19. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and ſhew mercy to whom I will ſhew mercy.* He might juſtly ſuffer all to go on in ruining themſelves eternally; but as he proclaims mercy in the goſpel, ſo to whomſoever he extends mercy, he muſt do it by an act of ſovereign grace, delivering them out of their own murdering and deſtroying hands.

Now, Sirs, here is another root of *true repentance* and *humiliation;* the former is a *true ſenſe of ſin*, as a deſtroyer; the next is an *apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt*, as a Saviour, and the only help? *In me is thy help.* The root of *true religion* lies in a right view of ourſelves, and our own ſinfulneſs; and next in a right view of God and his grace: for clearing this matter I offer a few remarks.

Firſt, I remark, from the ſcope of God's words here, "That he takes occaſion from our *ſins*, to ſet out his "grace." Man is unmerciful to himſelf; but God is

merciful to him. So cruel is man, that he deſtroys himſelf; ſo kind is God, that he offers his help, and hath *laid help upon One that is mighty*, upon his eternal Son, whom he hath given to be the Helper and Saviour, to ſhew his mercy. And by this inſtance, we may ſee, that God will do a thouſand times more to ſhew his mercy towards ſinners, than to ſhew his wrath againſt them. He hath *ſet forth Chriſt to be the propitiation*, to make his ſhewing mercy conſiſtent with the honour of juſtice, Rom. iii. 25, 26. It is true, ſome may think, how comes it then, that there are more damned than ſaved; for Chriſt ſays, *Strait is the gate* of life, *and few there are that find it*: But here, concerning the paucity of the ſaved, it is to be conſidered, that, as it is not improbable there ſhall be more glory among the few that ſhall be ſaved, than wrath among the many that ſhall be damned; ſo there is more mercy ſhewed, in ſaving a few, when he might have condemned all, than there is juſtice ſhewed, in condemning many, when he might have damned all.

Again, mercy is *abſolute*, having reſpect to nothing in us; but juſtice hath a reſpect to the *demerit* of ſin, *the wages* whereof *is death*. God, in ſhewing mercy, is himſelf at the whole coſt: but we make way for his juſtice, by provoking him. *Damnation* is an act of juſtice, that our ſin obliges him to do; but *ſalvation* is an act of mercy, which he is under no obligation to paſs: yet, notwithſtanding all our ſinfulneſs, he proclaims his willingneſs and readineſs to ſave and help. Hence, I think, it is remarkable, that, after the greateſt ſins that ever were committed, there have been inſtantly the greateſt diſplays of mercy: thus the firſt ſin, by which all mankind were ruined, was ſoon followed with the promiſe, wherein mercy was proclaimed.—— Here was the greateſt ſin, the root of all ſin among men; and yet the greateſt diſplay of mercy.

Again, that ſin of the Jews, in *crucifying the Lord of glory*, will be owned to be the greateſt ſin: and yet it is followed with the greateſt diſplay and proclamation of mercy: therefore Chriſt injoins his diſciples to *go and preach repentance and remiſſion of ſins in his name*,

to

to all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem, Luke xxiv. 27. Why, begin at Jeruſalem, who had juſt now embrued their hands in his blood! Why, they have moſt need of mercy; and the offer of it to them will manifeſt the ſovereignty of it. O who would not then put in for a ſhare of mercy in the blood of Chriſt? Why ſhould we refuſe our own mercy? *Here is water, what hinders* but we are *baptized?* Here is blood, what hinders but we are waſhed? Nothing hinders but our own wilful refuſing, and continuing to deſtroy ourſelves. Men will not welcome this offer of grace; they continue obſtinate till God create a *will*, and make them *willing in the day of his power:* and hence all that are helped, and ſaved out of their own murdering hands, muſt be ſaved by an act of ſovereign mercy; *In me is thy help.* Again,

The ſecond *remark* I offer is, "That the nature of "GOD requires, that in helping and ſaving of ſinners, "his mercy be *free* and *ſovereign:*" becauſe he is a ſovereign God, infinitely happy in himſelf without us; and it is at his option to manifeſt mercy or not, to ſave or not, as much as it was his option to make men or not. He does what he will *among the armies of heaven.* Hence he exerciſes ſovereignty in the cauſe why he ſhews mercy, even *becauſe he will ſhew mercy;* ſovereignty in the perſon whom he ſaves; in the time when he ſaves them, in the inſtruments by whom; and the means by which he ſaves them. I might ſhew, at large, how he does all this according to his own will and pleaſure; *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth*, James i. 18.

Thirdly, I remark, "That the nature of *man* requires "this, that if he be ſaved, it be by the *free, ſovereign* "grace, and mercy of God." What is man? He is a *deſpicable* creature, a worm; *Fear not, worm Jacob.* If Iſrael, that were ſuch a vaſt multitude, *like the ſtars of heaven*, the numerous offſpring of Jacob, be but a worm in God's ſight, then what is one man? Yea, before God *all the nations of the earth are as nothing, yea, leſs than nothing and vanity*, Iſa. xl. 15. What a little piece of that *nothing* are we, that God ſhould pity us!

Man

Man is a *deformed* creature, over-run with the loathſome leproſy of ſin; if there be any hope for ſuch, it muſt be of the free grace of God. Yea, man is a *rebellious* creature, as I have formerly ſhewed; he is neither able nor willing to help himſelf, but active and wilful in deſtroying himſelf. He deſpiſes and oppoſes all the loving *arguments* and *invitations* to *be reconciled* with God, 2 Cor. v. 20.——And becauſe we cannot win at God himſelf, we *crucify the Son of God*, as the Jews did when he came upon the errand of ſalvation. Here is the temper of the ſons of Adam, till grace ſubdue their enmity. Is there any thing here to move God to ſave? O! if free grace did not move itſelf, we would perſiſt for ever in our enmity. The ſalvation that he brings us to, is neither deſerved nor deſired by us. *Deſerved* it cannot be, where there is ſuch a deſert of hell and wrath: *deſired* it is not, unleſs God create that deſire of ſalvation, through Chriſt, in theſe who by nature wilfully reject him. Hence,

Fourthly, I remark, "That the nature of the *help* "that he gives and offers, is ſuch as declares it to be "only in himſelf that our help lies." I ſhall inſtance in the powerful help we need, both as to juſtifying and ſanctifying mercy. There are two great attributes of ſin, guilt and power.

1. Who can help the *guilt* of ſin, but a God of infinite power? It requires greater power to *pardon ſin*, than to work a miracle upon the body; *Whether is it eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Ariſe and walk? But that ye may know, that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins*, &c. Matth. ix. 5. The Phariſees made the objection, *Who can forgive ſins but God?* Chriſt takes their own argument, and uſes it againſt themſelves, ſhewing that he was God, becauſe he could forgive ſin. Why, can God only help from the guilt of ſin? Why, the guilt of ſin hath the whole ſtrength of God's law to back it, and take part with it; and God's law hath the whole ſtrength of infinite juſtice to maintain it: therefore there muſt be an infinite power to take away the guilt of ſin, even that ſame power that can ſatisfy infinite juſtice.

2. Who

2. Who can help away with the *power* of ſin? Sin is not only an *enemy* but *enmity;* and to kill enmity and reſiſtance againſt God, is more than to create a world out of *nothing*, where there is nothing to reſiſt. To take away ſin, and bring in grace, that are ſuch direct oppoſites, requires infinite power to effect it. There is in the underſtanding an incapacity to *underſtand the things of God;* for, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are fooliſhneſs to him.* Hence *the weapons of* the goſpel *warfare are powerful through God, to pull down ſtrong holds, and caſt down vain imaginations, that exalt themſelves againſt the knowledge of Chriſt*, and raiſe millions of objections againſt him: and when God helps the ſoul, he has all theſe mountains to level; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* Hence alſo the ſame power that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, is requiſite for raiſing a ſinner out of the grave of ſin. Let men talk of the power of nature as they will; let me ſee any of them that can raiſe themſelves, Epheſ. i. 19, 20. The change that God works when he takes away the power of ſin, is *from darkneſs to light*, from death to life; and, as it were, from being beaſts to be men; *The beaſt of the field ſhall honour me, the dragons, and the owls*, Iſaiah xliii. 20. Theſe beaſts are men, who elſewhere are compared to the wild aſs's-colt: *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*, verſe 21. To make a ſinner a ſaint, is as much as to make a beaſt a ſaint, or to turn a ſtone to a child of Abraham.—Therefore in God only is our help.

And now to apply this branch of the text. Hence,

1. We may ſee where the help of a *ruined church* lies. Scotland hath deſtroyed herſelf, but where lies her help? *Vain is the help of man;* vain is the help of princes and parliaments; vain is the help of church-judicatories. The poor ſcattered flocks of Scotland, oppreſſed with the violent obtruſion of *hirelings* upon them, have been crying to judicatories for help, but in vain; their *tender mercies* have been *cruelties* *. Yea,

* This affair was formerly laid open, Vol. V. pag. 304, 316, 357, 398, 424, 425.

vain

vain is the help of all creatures, even of these to whom some are now looking for help; I mean, a handful of MINISTERS associated together for the relief of the poor oppressed people of God, and for testifying against the *corruptions* and *defections* of the day; vain, I say, is their help, unless the Lord put to his hand; for, *If the Lord do not build the city, the builders build in vain.* It is the *Man whose name is the* BRANCH, that must *build the temple of the Lord, and bear the glory:* your help lies *in the name of the Lord, that made heaven and earth.* Yet hence see,

2. That it is the Lord only that can *raise up helpers*, and *Saviours in mount Zion*; and therefore to him alone ought we to look, that he would put a blessing in any *means* and endeavours towards *Reformation.* Our help being only in the Lord does not exclude the use of *means*, but obliges us thereunto, with an eye to his helping hand. And surely, the Lord is calling us to some other thing, than the present judicatories are doing. Is it not duty at this day to go out, and do some things that the judicatories in Scotland will not do?—Is it not duty before God at this day, to *assert* and vindicate openly, these truths of God that judicatories have been burying; and to attempt, in his strength, to lift up that crown of our royal King Jesus, which is profaned on the ground?—Is it not duty from the word of God to *confess* that *we and our fathers have sinned*, and to discover and lay open these sins and defections for which the wrath of God is coming on such a generation as we are; and which yet the judicatories will not do, but rather cover and hide, declaring, that they will not return to God this way, by confessing all their particular defections? And because judicatories will not do it, shall it be done by none? When God says, *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their iniquity, and seek my face;* ought we not to go away when God goes away, and leave them whom God leaves? At least till God's term-day, *till they acknowledge their sin, and seek his face;* and, at least, so far as to take a contrary course, namely, of *fasting, humiliation,*

liation, and *folemn acknowledgement of ſin*. When judicatories are ſaying they will not appoint any faſts; they ſee no occaſion for it; is it not duty from the word of God to *feed* Chriſt's *lambs*, which the judicatories are ſtarving; or to gather his flock, whom they are ſcattering and oppreſſing, by their violent meaſures in obtruding hirelings upon them, and opening the door to grievous wolves *to enter in?* And, is it not duty, not only to *pray the Lord of the harveſt to ſend forth faithful labourers to* it, but alſo to join hand with theſe that are willing to be active in this matter; and to give help in this work, wherein the glory of God, and the good of ſouls is much concerned?—Is it not your duty to *teſtify* for Chriſt, as ſolemnly and judicially as providence gives occaſion, when judicatories are unwilling to bear witneſs for Chriſt; yea, and have thrown faithful teſtimonies, offered to them, over the bar; beſides their refuſing *Inſtructions*, *Petitions*, and a multitude of *Remonſtrances* theſe many years by-gone?—Is it not duty from the word of God, for theſe that bear a good-will to the cauſe of Chriſt, be they never ſo few in number, to do their duty, and to *obey* the command of their higheſt Lord, when the greater part are combining to diſobey him?—Is it not evident, as with a ſun-beam, that it is warrantable from the word, for the leſſer part of the church, were it but two or three to whom the promiſe is made, (yea, were it but two or three in the whole catholic church) to do the work of God which the reſt will not do, be the conſequence what it will; and let men call their practice *ſeparation*, or what they pleaſe?

3. Here is a door of hope caſt open for *poor*, *periſhing*, *ſelf-deſtroying* ſinners, even for the greateſt of ſinners, for *publicans*, and perſecuting Sauls, for Manaſſehs, and Mary Magdalenes. God can make uſe of knotty timber, for building his temple: he can *take brands out of the fire*, that have the ſmoak of hell about them: *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thine help.* Here is no room left either for deſpair or preſumption.

(1.) Beware of *presumption.* Some presumptuously may say, If our help lies only in God, then we need do nothing in the use of means; as if one should say, the wind only can make the ship to sail, therefore we need not ly at the shore and wait for it. Say not, If my works cannot save me, I may go on in my sin; for though good works cannot save you, yet your ill works can damn you: though you cannot save yourself, yet you can destroy yourself more and more: therefore beware of presumption. And likewise,

(2.) Beware of *despair*, when such a door of hope is cast open. Though you be nothing but dead and dry bones, yet *God can make these dry bones live.* Yea, not only, notwithstanding your sin, can God save and help you, but because of the greatness of your sin, he can shew the greatness of his grace. Hence said the Psalmist, *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* God *waits to be gracious*, Isa. xxx. 18. He can take occasion from your sinfulness, to magnify his mercy, saying, *I have seen his ways, and will heal him.* He can make your sin, though it be a good reason why he should damn you, yet he can make it a reason why he will save you, and pity you, Hosea ii. 13, 14. Therefore,

O *sinner!* that *hast destroyed thyself*, come and *accept of the offer of mercy*, the offer of God's help; for in him only lies your help.——Accept of the offer of Christ the mighty helper, on whom God hath laid all your help; all discouragements are out of the way; all hinderances on God's part are actually removed; the law is fulfilled, justice satisfied, *everlasting righteousness is brought in:* all bars and impediments on your part are virtually removed, in the purchase made by the blood of Christ. It will aggravate your misery for ever, if you refuse mercy; yea, this is a treating God worse than the worst of men will treat the vilest of men: they will do good to these that do good to them: but will you spit in the face of mercy, and do ill to God, because he does good to you?

God commands you to come to his Christ, and accept of his mercy, and take his help; *This is his commandment, that ye believe in his Son,* and his command

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is powerful to effect it; *faith comes by hearing* his word, his command. Thus it shall be to some whom he hath a mind to help. Nor does he deceive others, by commanding and calling of them, because thus he touches their conscience, and discovers their *enmity*, while by the word they are convinced, and yet not conquered; which shews the more that their ruin is of themselves.

O sinner! thou hast destroyed thyself; yea, thy unbelief is the sin that would destroy God, if it could. It destroys his truth, and makes him a liar; it destroys his mercy, and says he is cruel, notwithstanding all his offers of grace. By unbelief refusing God's help, you, in an eminent manner, darken and oppose the glory of God; his glorious perfections, that shine only most bright in the face of Jesus, on whom your help is laid; and oppose his highest design for glorifying these perfections, Ephes. i. 11,—14. Your unbelief is direct murder, by which, more than all your other sins, you destroy yourself. Why, it is a sin that rejects the only remedy. There is *no balm in Gilead, no physician there*, but Christ, Acts iv. 12. and him you undervalue. It is a sin that binds all your other sins upon you. Tho' all sin be damning and killing, yet no sin shall damn you, if you add not thereto the sin of neglecting and refusing God's help and mercy, that he offers in Christ. Why are not these condemned that believe in Christ? Is it because they have no sin to condemn them? No; but because, believing in Jesus, all their sins are done away: but *he that believeth not, is condemned already.* Why? Is it because he is a sinner in general? Or because his sins are many and great? No; but because he hath not *believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Hence see, that the immediate cause of damnation is not this or that sin, but the refusing of Christ by unbelief. The man refuses a whole eternity of glorious and unspeakable happiness, and chuses rather sin and death. Unbelief leaves you without all excuse, or the least shadow and colour of excuse, John xv. 22. You must be speechless in the great day. You cannot say pardon and salvation was not offered to you; you

cannot say the offer was not full and free; you cannot say you had to do with a hard master. And as it will leave you without excuse, so without appeal. Here we may say, as in 1 Sam. ii. 25. *If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* If a man sin against the law, he may appeal to the gospel, and the grace of God in Christ; but if he reject Christ, and the grace of the gospel, where then shall he appeal? Truly there is no relief to be found for him. A sinner may appeal from justice to the mercy-seat: but if he slight the offer of mercy, he hath nothing to appeal to, that may administer relief to him. Nay, thus he, in effect, pulls down the mercy-seat.

Let me exhort you, then, to come to Jesus for *help* and *salvation*, O self-destroying sinner, that you may not be eternally destroyed. Is it like a reasonable soul, to live in that miserable case, to stand tottering upon the brink of *Tophet*, and dancing merrily away to *everlasting destruction?* To be living at the mercy of death, or of every disease tending thereto, which, if it will but fall upon thee, will send thee into the burning pit? Suppose you saw a condemned wretch, hanging over Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, by nothing but a twined thread, ready to break every moment, would not your heart tremble for such an one: Why, but thou art the man, infinitely more miserable man or woman; this is the very case, thou wast never yet drawn to Christ by all the preaching ever you heard. What if the thread of thy life should break? You know not but it may, the next night, the next day, the next moment; and where wouldst thou then be? Whither wouldst thou then drop? Behold, upon the crack of this thread of life, thou fallest *into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*, where thou shalt ly, and die, and roar for ever, even as long as God hath a being, if thou diest in thy present case; and yet does not thy soul tremble nor begin to *smite upon thy breast*, and bethink thyself, what need thou hast of this Jesus that is offered to thee, and who requires thee to come to him? Oh! what is thy heart

heart made of, that thou haſt not only loſt all regard to God, but all love and pity to thyſelf? Alas! if you knew your miſery, you would cry out for Chriſt more than ever a wounded man did for a chirurgeon, or a drowning man for a boat. If there be any point of wiſdom or reaſon in the world, it is that you return to God, and come in to Jeſus, for life and ſalvation from ſin and wrath. If there be any thing that can be called madneſs and folly in the world, any thing brutiſh, abſurd, and unreaſonable, it is that you live in your ſin, and remain in a Chriſtleſs ſtate.

But if harſh arguments will not do, and indeed nothing but a *day of power*, will do the buſineſs; tell me, is there no power and virtue in a day of grace and mercy, or an offer of grace? I tell you therefore, you are welcome to come to Jeſus, whatever you have done, or whatever you have been hitherto; *Whoſoever will, let him come;* and *him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* The day of wrath is not yet come; the day of grace is yet continued, notwithſtanding all the offers of grace you have ſlighted heretofore. Sometimes God makes them very gracious who have been very graceleſs, ſuch as Paul, Manaſſeh, and Mary Magdalene; whatever, therefore, be your ſinfulneſs and filthineſs, there is a *fountain opened to the houſe of David, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs.*—Though you had *crucified the Son of God;* here is his *blood that cleanſes from all ſin.* Though your heart be made of flint and ſtone, yet God *can of ſtones raiſe up children to Abraham.*

O young ſinner, come to Jeſus. He welcomes young ſeekers of him, ſaying, *They that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* Old ſinner, that haſt long been dead in ſin, and rotting in the grave of corruption, and buried among the ſtuff of this world, Oh! wilt thou ariſe, and come out of thy grave? The Maſter calls upon you. Come, come, and ſeek to him, that he may glorify his name in your ſalvation. What think you is his reaſon in calling ſuch wretched ſinners as you are? It is juſt upon a deſign of glorifying himſelf in your ſalvation. It is, 1. To magnify the grace of God, that *where ſin hath*

hath abounded, grace may much more abound. 2. It is to magnify the blood of Chriſt, that can waſh away ſuch ſcarlet-coloured ſins as yours are. 3. It is to magnify the power of the Spirit, that can convert and draw to himſelf ſuch a ſtubborn ſinner as thou art. O then wilt thou fall in with this deſign of God, praying, that God may glorify himſelf; that Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt may be magnified in your ſalvation. Alas! wretched ſinner! wilt thou neither let God have the honour he craves, nor your ſoul the happineſs it wants?

Let none object, ſaying O this help is far off, when God ſays, It is *in me; in me is thy help.* God ſpeaks here in the preſent time; and God is a *preſent help.* Chriſt the helper is not at a diſtance. He is IMMANUEL, *God with us;* and you need not ſay, *Who will aſcend to bring him down?* and *deſcend to bring him up?* He is *near,* in this word, and you are called to take him at his word, and to take his help offered in this word; *In me is thine help.*

Neither let any object, ſaying, "O this help is not for me; may be it is not deſigned for me: perhaps he hath not a mind to give help to me." Why, man, woman, how ſhall you know God's mind, but by his word? And will you contradict the *truth of God* flatly, ſaying, It is not for me, when he is ſaying, *In me is thy help;* thy help, man, thy help, woman, thy help, O ſelf-deſtroying ſinner? Do not, through unbelief, make God a liar, ſaying, In him is not my help, when he is ſaying ſo expreſly, *In me is thy help.* How will this aggravate thy condemnation, if thou *neglecteſt this great ſalvation,* when to *thee is the word of this ſalvation ſent?* To thee is this help ſent: O poor ſoul, put it not away from thee.

Let none ſay, How is it poſſible that I can be ſaved? when you ſee it is God that undertakes this work, ſaying, *In me is thy help. Look to me and be ſaved: for I am God, and there is none elſe?* Is there any thing too hard for me to do? And let none ſay, Alas! I am without ſtrength, I can do nothing but ruin myſelf. It is true; and therefore God ſays not in *thee* is thy help, but in *me.* Never look for a ground of faith or hope

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in thyſelf; for thou ſhalt never find it any where, but *in me:* in my name, in my blood, in my promiſe, in my power, in my free mercy and ſovereign grace, reigning through juſtice-ſatisfying righteouſneſs to *eternal life; In me is thy help.* Come and take what belongs to thee through my ſovereign grant in this word of grace; and take it by believing upon my divine teſtimony, and believing with particular application to thyſelf, that *in me is thy help:* he that thus *believeth ſhall be ſaved.*

May the Lord himſelf perſuade you to come to him for help, who ſays, *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thine help.*

SERMON

SERMON CV.

CHAMBERS of SAFETY in TIMES of DANGER.*

ISAIAH xxvi. 20, 21.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

MY friends, it is a very hard matter for people to be made sensible of their *sin*, and *danger* by reason of sin, so as to flock in to Christ, before he come and apprehend them in their sin by his *judgments*; and therefore before he comes this way to us, he again and again requires us to come to him, and take shelter in himself as the only hiding-place. O what a mercy were it, if, when we hear of the Lord's coming to judgment, we were fearing and *flying from the wrath to come!* At the voice of the Lord the birds will cry, the beasts will roar, the hinds will calve, the cedars will shake, the mountains will tremble, Psal. xxix.; but, behold, men and women, though endued with rational souls, and hearing his threatening voice in his word, yet neither fear his voice, nor tremble at his word, nor flee from his wrath to his mercy, nor from their sin to the Saviour, to save them from sin and

* This sermon was preached on a FAST DAY, at Evandale, September 19. 1739. It hath now undergone six impressions.

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wrath: the moſt part will not hear on that ſide of the head. The wicked deſire to be let alone in their wickedneſs, that they may live at peace therein; while yet *there is no peace ſaith my God, to the wicked.* We are all, by reaſon of ſin, under God's anger, and yet know it not; and therefore are not ſeeking to go out of the way wherein God's anger burns, nor to be friends with him; but here the merciful God is opening the door of mercy, and all the chamber-doors of the city of refuge, ſaying, Before the ſtorm of wrath come on, turn in there. O may we hearken to his call?

This text is a call upon the back of a ſong in the former part of the chapter. After ſinging, the church may prepare for ſuffering. It is ſaid of the diſciples, after their laſt communion with Chriſt, *When they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives*, the place of ſuffering and trial. The ſongs of the temple do not exclude ſufferings; but may be preparatory for them. The laſt part of the ſong here was with reference to a *ſpiritual reſurrection*, pointing out alſo the *general reſurrection*, ver. 19. *Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe; awake and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead.* It ſeems to be a prophecy of the ſpiritual reſurrection of ſinners, and particularly of the Gentiles, which was to take place upon the back of Chriſt's reſurrection. *Together with my dead body ſhall they live*; they ſhall be called after Chriſt's reſurrection, and ſhall riſe with him, and *ſit with him in heavenly places*; yea, as it is in the original here, where the words *together with* are but a ſupplement, *My dead body ſhall they ariſe.* They ſhall become the myſtical body of Chriſt, and riſe as part of him: and this will uſher in the laſt glorious reſurrection of the ſaints, of whom *Chriſt is the firſt fruits*, 1 Cor. v. 20.

Now, how and by what means, ſhall this ſpiritual reſurrection be accompliſhed? Why, even by the call of God, and the voice of Chriſt in the everlaſting goſpel, whereof here you have one in my text, *Come, my*

people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee : hide thyſelf, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be over-paſt.

In which words you have theſe four things more generally.

1. The *duty* to which they are called and exhorted ; that is, to *come and enter into their chambers*, and *ſhut their doors, about them, and hide themſelves.* Theſe are metaphorical expreſſions, drawn from the practice of peoples taking ſhelter before a ſtorm ; and importing, that they would ſpeedily come in to Chriſt for refuge, and make uſe of all theſe ways and means God hath appointed in his word ; particularly, by faith and repentance, turning from ſin to God, through Jeſus Chriſt. This is the duty.

2. The *extent* of the duty, *For a* LITTLE MOMENT, *till the indignation be overpaſt ;* importing, that they are to continue in the exerciſe of theſe duties till the effects of God's anger be over. And it is but a moment ; though it be all your life-time, it is but a moment in comparison of eternity. All their afflictions here, however tedious they may ſeem, are but ſhort and momentary, when compared with the happineſs reſerved for them. The ſtorm may blow very hard, but it will over, and come to a period.

3. You have the *perſons* to whom this exhortation is given, *my people ;* that is, not only theſe that are mine by profeſſion, and common federal relation ; but eſpecially *mine* by ſpecial covenant-relation, by ſpecial adoption and participation of my Spirit, that know my will, and do it : for theſe ſeem here to be ſet in oppoſition to the reſt of the world, that are called the *inhabitants of the earth*, in the next verſe.

4. You have the *kindly arguments* and *familiar way* wherein this duty is preſſed. The kindly way is, *Come, my people.* It is not, *Go in thither*, where I am not to be with you ; but, *Come in here*, where I am ; come to me, come with me : and ſo, while he propoſes the duty, he propoſes himſelf to be the Leader and Helper in the duty. It is not, Go yourſelf alone ; but, *Come ; come with me from Lebanon.*

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The argument and reaſon is, there is a *ſtorm coming*; ſtay not without doors, leſt the ſtorm be upon you; why, *Behold the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain.* Where alſo you may obſerve four things.

(1.) The *certainty* of the thing, it is with a *Behold*; BEHOLD, *he cometh:* it ſhall certainly be; and you ſhall ſee God executing vengeance. It is certain, therefore behold it.

(2.) The *ſolemnity* of the thing; *The* LORD *cometh out of his place, to puniſh.* It is ſpoken after the manner of man, like one riſing in fury out of his place, to reach a ſtroke to his enemy; as it is ſaid, Iſa. xxviii. 12. *The Lord ſhall riſe up as in mount Peraſim, he ſhall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his ſtrange work; and bring to paſs his act, his ſtrange act.* It is with a ſpecial ſolemnity he threatens to puniſh; *Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh.*

(3.) The *juſtice* of it: God comes to afflict and plague them that are the inhabitants of the earth, but it ſhall be in *righteous* and *juſt* puniſhment of their iniquity; the cry of their ſins brings God out of his place, to puniſh them. Beſides the everlaſting puniſhment which the wicked ſhall undergo hereafter, there are inſtances of remarkable puniſhments of ſinful nations and churches, when their ſin has come to a height.

(4.) The *neceſſity* of it: *The earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and no more cover her ſlain:* that is, the very earth cries for vengeance on the ſinners that live upon the earth; the earth ſhall vomit up the blood that hath been unjuſtly ſhed, as the voice of Abel's blood *cried for the earth*, Gen. iv. 10, 11. See Job xx. 27. *The heaven ſhall reveal his iniquity, and the earth ſhall riſe up againſt him.* Theſe bloody ſins that ſeemed to have been buried in oblivion, will be called to mind; and the earth itſelf that ſeemed to cover and hide them, will diſcover and reveal them, and witneſs againſt the ſinner. Omitting many doctrines take this one.

OBSERV. *That in shaking times, when wrath is threatened upon a sinful people, such is the care that God hath for the safety and security of his own, that he wills them to come into their chambers and not stay without doors, to be exposed to the violence of the storm that is a-coming.*

For proof and illustration of this doctrine, we shall confirm both the branches of it.

1. That God hath a *care of his own*, their *safety* and *security*, is plain here from his direction given to them, what they are to do, before he bring on a storm. And you may notice the respect he hath to their security, v. 1. of this chapter; *In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.* See, to this purpose, Mal. iii. 16, 17. in evil times he will *make up his jewels*, and *spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him.* Read also, Amos ix. 8, 9. *Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord, For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel, among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.* It is said, Matthew xxiv. 24. That *false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive, if it were* POSSIBLE, *the very elect*: but it is not *possible* they can be either *deceived* or *destroyed.*

2. That God *wills them to come into their chambers before the storm of wrath come on*, as here and elsewhere. See Zeph. i. 1, 2, 3. *Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired, before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.* To this purpose you may read, Joel ii. 12, 13, 14. *Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping,*

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and with mourning. And rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering, and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God? See some promises also to this purpose; *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock*, Psalm xxvii. 5. *Thou shalt hide me in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues*, Psalm xxx. 20. See his name; *The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee*, Psalm ix, 9, 10.: and also his peoples practice; *I flee to thee to hide me*, Psal. cxliii. 9.

The method we would observe, for the farther prosecution of this subject, thro' divine assistance, shall be the following.

I. Enquire when may the time be said to be a *threatening* time, so as a storm is evidently approaching?
II. Why the Lord will take care of his people's *safety* and *security* in such times?
III. What *chambers* he wills them to come into, in order to their safety?
IV. Make *application* of the whole subject.

I. When is it evident that a *storm of wrath* is coming upon a land, and that the Lord is about to come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth? To this we reply in the following particulars.

1. When *all manner of sins abound*, and these become *national;* such as these mentioned, Hos. iv. 1, 2, 3. *There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land: by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth*

eth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one therein shall languish, &c. Together with backsliding from God's covenant, hypocrisy, and lukewarmness; Isa. x. 5, 6, lviii. 1,—8. xxix. 13, 14. When people are lukewarm, God will *spue them out of his mouth*, Rev. iii. 16. Incorrigibleness, Deut. xxviii. 20. When they persecute the servants of God, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. When universal security prevails, as it did over the old world, Jer. v. 11, 12. Falling from their first love, Rev. ii. 4, 5. Obstinacy in sin, Numb. xiv. 41,—44. Oppression of the poor and fatherless, Exod. xxi. 22, 23, 24. Covenant-breaking, Deut. xxix. 24, 25. Lothing of the heavenly manna, and despising the gospel, the word of God, Jer. xxvi. 4, 5, 6. Scoffing at religion and good men, Psal. xxxvii. 13, 14. Jer. xviii. 20, 21. When error abounds, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Unbelief, the mother-sin, Psal. lxxviii. 20, 21, 22,—33. cvi. 24. Pride, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26. Corrupting the worship of God, 1 Kings xi. 5,—9. Disobedience to the call of God, upon whatever pretence, and following false light, 1 Kings xiii. 17,—26.

2. It is evident that a storm of wrath is coming upon a land, when people's sins are *aggravated*. When they are the sins of Jerusalem, of a professing people, then six angels were sent to destroy them, while only two were sent to Sodom; as you see, Ezek. ix. 2. *And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughtering weapon in his hand.*—When sins are committed against much light, against many checks of conscience, many beams of light, many means of grace, many calls of providence, many instances of mercy and divine goodness; and against the patience and forbearance of God, as you see, Rom. ii. 4, 5.

3. When the *patience* of God is not only *abused*, but *laughed* at, and *ridiculed* by a profane age, that begin to say, as it is said, 2 Pet. iii. 4. *Where is the promise of his coming?* Where is the threatening of his coming to judgment? Then is the Lord angry, and will let men know that he is not *slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness*, though he is *long-suffering to us-*

ward;

ward; and that he is not ſlack concerning his threatening, but *will render vengeance to his enemies*, Deut. xxxii. 41.

4. It is an evidence that the Lord is about to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth, when there are *few or none to ſtand in the gap*, and keep out the wrath that is coming in; *And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedge, and ſtand in the gap before me for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have conſumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompenſed upon their heads, ſaith the Lord God*, Ezek. xxii. 30, 31. Then it is the time for the birds to fly into their neſts; the ſtorm is approaching.—When *good men are taken away*, and there is great ſcarcity of them; *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* Iſa. lviii. 1. It is on this account the prophet Micah cries out, *Wo is me, for the good man is periſhed out of the earth, and there is none upright among men*, Micah vii. 1, 2.——In a word ſometimes the *aſpect of providence* propheſies this to all that have eyes in their head.

II. We come now to ſpeak a little of the *reſpect* the Lord hath to the *ſafety* and *ſecurity* of his own people when a ſtorm is coming. And here we may conſider, 1. The *reaſons* why; 2. The *manner* how he ſecures them.

1*ſt*, He will do ſo, as appears from theſe *reaſons* following, among others.

1. Becauſe he *loves* them with a peculiar love. Hence the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cvi. 5. prays that the Lord would let him ſee *the good of his choſen, that*, ſays he, *I may rejoice in the gladneſs of thy nation, and that I may rejoice with thine inheritance.* The love of God is above all love; and it is a tender and a compaſſionate love. He loves his people, and therefore can protect them in time of danger; *As a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that* love and *fear him*, Pſal. ciii. 13.

Though

Though he *visit their iniquities with rods*, yet his *loving-kindness will he not utterly take from them*, Psalm lxxxix. 32.

2. He will take care of their safety, because of his *Relation* to them; he being their God, and they his people; he their King, and they his subjects. He is indeed Lord and King of all the earth, but theirs in a special sense.—He is their *Shepherd*, and they the sheep of his pasture; and, because he is their Shepherd, they shall not want protection or provision in straits.—He is their *Father*, and they his sons and daughters: Will he not take care of his children?—He is their *Husband;* and will he not take care of his spouse? *No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth it, even as the Lord the church*, Eph. v 29.

3. The Lord will provide for the security of his people, because of the constant *intercession* of Christ for them in heaven; for he is their *Advocate*, appearing in the presence of God for them. There are some who have been given to Christ by the Father, whom he will take care of and protect by his prayers; *I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me*, John xvii. 9. The preservation of the remnant is owing to Christ's prayer and intercession. See this clear from Zech. i. 12, 13. *Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against whom thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years. And the Lord answered the angel, that talked with me, with good words, and comfortable words.*

4. The Lord will take care of his own, because of his *promise* engaged for their security; Psal. xxvii. 5. *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.* Isa. xxxiii. 16. *He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.* Chap. xxxii. 2. *A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.* Mal. iii. 17. *And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and, I will spare them as a man spareth*

spareth his own son that serveth him. He will set a mark upon them, Ezek. ix. 4. *Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark on the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

2*dly*, How, and in what *manner* will he secure them, when they seem as much exposed as the rest of the world? Do not good men fall in common calamities as well as others? True, indeed; sometimes it is so: but then it is,

1. For their *compliance* with the sins of the time, and not coming into their chambers, but staying without doors, when the storm comes on. When they partake of the sins of the wicked, they partake of their plagues: when they are too much conform to the world, they suffer with the world. Good men may be careless in *sanctifying the Lord*, and making him their *fear and dread;* but, when they do so, then he is for a *sanctuary*, Isa. viii. 13, 14.

2. God sometimes suffers his own to fall in the common calamity, because there is *another world*, there is a *rest remaining for them*, a better happiness than this life.

Yet after all, there is a vast difference betwixt the *righteous* falling in the common calamity, and the *wicked*. 1. The godly man may suffer affliction, and yet have the *support* of *divine grace*, while the wicked know nothing of it. 2 The sufferings of the one *purge* him, the sufferings of the other *poison* him. 3. They are for a *chastisement* to the one, but for a *punishment* to the other. 4. Yea, *death* itself to the one but kills his *body*, but to the other it is the destruction of *soul* and body both *.

But, as to the *manner* how God secures his people in common danger.

1. He sometimes secures them by *death* itself, that they may not see the evil and farther calamity that is

* The difference between the afflictions of the righteous and the wicked, is more copiously handled, above Serm XCI. p. 112.–125; and al the chastisements of the Lord's people shewn to be consistent with love.

coming upon the earth. Thus it is said of Abijah, 1 Kings xiv. 13. *He shall die: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave; because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.* None in Jeroboam's family had any good thing in them but this child. Thus see what is said of good Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. *Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place.*

2. God secures his people in the storm, by *supporting* and *comforting* them in their trouble; *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God*, 2 Cor. i. 4. Who would not drink of that cup that is sweetened with the consolation of the Holy Ghost, sometimes making them say, This trouble is no trouble; this pain is no pain; this rack is like a bed of roses, for the sense of God's love swallows up all?

3. In a word, he hath wonderful ways of securing them by his *presence* and *providence*. Thus Paul was secured by the merciful providence of God, when forty persons and persecutors had vowed his ruin, and that they *should neither eat nor drink till they had killed him*. Both scripture and ecclesiastical history are full of instances of his merciful protecting providence. Infinite Wisdom hath many ways to secure his own.

III. The *third* head proposed was, To shew what *chambers* he wills them to come into, that they may escape the storm when a-coming.

In general, when we speak of *chambers*, it supposes a *house*, where the chambers are. Now, as God himself, a God in Christ, is the house, Psalm xxxi. 2. *Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me:* and there are as many chambers in this house as there are attributes and perfections in God, to which we are called to fly by faith: so the church of God is called a house; the church invisible a *spiritual* house: *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,*

1 Peter

1 Peter ii. 5.; *a habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 22. And here there are chambers that belong to the houſe, and to which all the houſhold of faith will betake themſelves.

More particularly, I ſhall name four ſorts of chambers we are invited to come into, that are the chambers of the houſe of God, as belonging to every one that hath come into the houſe. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers.*

1. There are chambers of *diſtinction* we are invited to come into, even to our own apartments, ſo as not to be united with or conform to the world; *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate*, 2 Cor. vi. 17. Come out of Babylon; *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and ſo partake of her plagues*, Rev. xviii. 4. How are we to come out of the world? It is by *not partaking* with the world in their ſins; *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*, Eph. v. 7.; and by being not *conform* to the world; *Be not conform to the world, but be ye transformed*, Rom. xii. 2. And thus we are to come out of Babylon, or out of the corrupt part of a church, by not *partaking* with them, or being *conform* to them, but rather *teſtifying againſt them* in the name of Chriſt. This is the way how the ſaints in ſcripture have overcome their enemies; *They overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony*, Rev. xii. 11. This is the way we are to diſtinguiſh ourſelves for the Lord, in threatening times, by coming into the chambers of diſtinction, or apartment of the houſe, that it may appear we are on the Lord's ſide. If God hath *ſet the godly apart for himſelf*, they ought to ſet themſelves apart from this world.

2. There are chambers of *defence* we are called to come into, where we may be ſafe in the worſt of times. The *name of God is a ſtrong tower*, a ſtrong chamber, a chamber of ſtrength, Prov. xviii. 10. into which we are to run for ſhelter. *They that know thy name will put their truſt in thee*, Pſalm ix. 10.—Every *perfection* of God is a chamber; *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever*,

for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. These are the secrets of his tabernacle, Psalm xxvii. 5. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*—Every *office* of Christ is a chamber; and he invites us to come into him, and rest safely; *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* Mat. xi. 28. —Every *promise* of the covenant is a chamber; and they are very sure, firm, and durable rooms and apartments, being all *Yea and Amen in Christ.* The *word of the Lord endureth for ever;* and we are to come in there by faith in his word, and holy confidence in a promising God ——By faith, every believer finds a way to these chambers, and there he hides himself with pleasure, and triumphs, when he finds himself brought there; *The King hath brought me into his chambers, we will rejoice and be glad in thee,* Song i. 4.

3. There are chambers of *devotion* that we are called to come into; *Enter thou into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret,* and seeth in secret, Mat. vi 6. Recourse to these chambers of devotion, for seeking God in private and secret, as well as public, is always our duty, especially in times of danger, and of threatened wrath; therefore *seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.* And thus we may hide ourselves in the evil day, when we put ourselves in God's hand to hide us; *I flee to thee to hide me,* Psalm xliii. 9. And their *hearts shall live that seek him.* All that call upon him in truth shall be safe, and shall be hid, either under heaven, or in heaven; *The prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself.* O come into the chambers of devotion.

4. There are chambers of *action* and *business* that we are called to come into. God's house is not only a *house of prayer,* but a *work-house,* wherein we are to do something for God in our day and generation; *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* Matth. xx. 6. And chap. xxi. 28. *Go work to-day in my vineyard.* God calls his people, not only to cry and pray to him, but also to action and diligence. When Israel were in great danger

danger at the side of the Red-sea, and their enemies behind pursuing them, God says to Moses, *Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak to the people that they go forward*, Exod. xv. 15. We are not only to *cry* but to *go forward* in our work and service, in our several places and stations, as magistrates, ministers, or people, in all the duties incumbent upon us, when judgments are threatened.

IV. The *fourth* and last head proposed was, To make *application*. Is it so, *That in shaking times, when wrath is threatened upon a sinful people, such is the care that God hath for the safety and security of his own, that he wills them to come into their chambers and not stay without doors, to be exposed to the violence of the storm that is a-coming?* Then hence see,

1. What good reason there is to apprehend that a *storm of wrath is a-coming*, and that the Lord is about to punish the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland for their iniquity.——Scotland, England, and Ireland are guilty of breaking a Solemn League and Covenant they made with God for Reformation. And our bloody sins cry from the earth for vengeance to come down from heaven: our perjury cries for vengeance; the sins of civil and ecclesiastic courts, the sins of princes, pastors, and people, cry for vengeance; our bloodshed cries for vengeance'; our unbelief and despising of Christ, cry for vengeance; our long contempt of the means of grace cries for vengeance; our defection and apostasy cry for vengeance; all the catalogue of sins, formerly mentioned, cry for vengeance. Before Jerusalem was destroyed, a terrible sword hang over the temple. My friends, the sword of the Lord hangs over us in these lands. Though there want not signs in the very heavens and earth portending sad days, yet we need no other signs than what the word of God declares to us, that national sins must be punished with national desolation. Many special judgments are we under already; and the glory of the Lord is far removed from the sanctuary, and the slaughter-weapons are ready: even through

though France and Spain * were not so ready as they seem to be, yet God, who hath many arrows in his quiver, is ready, saying, Joel ii. 13, 14. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get ye down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.*

2. Hence see who they are that alone shall be *safe* and *happy* in the day of public calamities and common destruction, namely, the *Lord's people*, who shelter themselves in the chambers of safety and protection which God calls them to come into: his poor humbled people, who sigh and mourn for all the abominations done in the midst of Jerusalem.

But, leaving all other uses and inferences, I come to offer the *exhortation* in the text; *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.* Come, as Noah into the ark, and shut the doors about you, when God threatens a flood.—Israel must keep within doors when the destroying angel is slaying the first-born of Egypt, else the blood upon the door-posts will not secure them; so must Rahab and her family when Jericho was destroyed.

I shall offer a few *directions*, and then lay down some *considerations* out of the text.

1st, We are to tender some *directions* to you. Well then, Sirs, O be persuaded to come in,

1. To your chambers of *distinction*, and side yourselves for God. If *Baal be God*, then follow him; but if the *Lord be God*, then follow him.

2. Come into your chambers of *defence*. There is *no other name given under heaven, whereby to be saved, but the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The name of the*

† Britain, for a considerable time, before this, had been on the point of an open rupture with Spain: several acts of hostilities has already commenced by the Spaniards; and this year war was openly declared by Britain against Spain, on the 28th day of October. France, ever watchful to embrace an opportunity to appear against the British nation, soon threw herself into the scale; at first, by making captures of many of our ships, under Spanish colours; and, at last, by a declaration of war, in favours of the Spanish court.

Lord

Lord is a ſtrong tower, to which the righteous run and are ſafe.

3. Come into your chambers of *devotion*; and, O pray, pray, pray. Let your carnal, formal, twice-a-day prayers be turned into David's ſeven times a-day: let your hypocritical howling be turned into praying; and your praying be turned into wreſtling and violence; *The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

4. Come into your chambers of *action*, *work*, and *buſineſs*, in your ſeveral ſtations:

(1.) As MAGISTRATES, by their *authority*, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate. See how the king of Nineveh behaved when judgments were threatened, Jonah iii. 6, 7, 9. *For word came to the king of Nineveh, and he aroſe from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered himſelf with ſackcloth, and ſat in aſhes: and cauſed it to be proclaimed and publiſhed thorough Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles, ſaying, Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock, taſte any thing; let them not feed nor drink water: who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* So did Jehoſhaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 3. *And Jehoſhaphat feared, and ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a faſt.* Magiſtrates ſhould ſolemnly *execute judgment and juſtice*, Jer. v. 1. chap. xxi. 2.; yea, they ſhould ſolemnly reform themſelves, and ſtudy the reformation of the land and places of their concern, ſo did Aſa, Joſiah, and Jehoſhaphat.

(2.) MINISTERS are to do their duty; partly by *preaching boldly* againſt all manner of ſin, for the convincing and humbling of ſinners; *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and ſhew my people their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins*, Iſaiah lviii. 1.: partly by *praying* and *interceeding* in behalf of the Lord's people; *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence, and give him no reſt till he eſtabliſh and make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth*, Iſaiah lxii. 6, 7. *Let the prieſts, the miniſters of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them ſay, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine inheritance to reproach,*

Joel

Joel ii. 17.: and partly by using that *authority* God has given them for the *edification of the body of Christ*.

(3.) PEOPLE are to do their duty, by *humbling* themselves for all their own sins, and the sins of the land, sprinkling themselves by faith in the blood of the Lamb, Exod. xii. 13.; *Ceasing to do evil, and learning to do good;* and *sighing and crying for all the abominations done in Jerusalem*, that a mark may be set upon them.

We shall now offer the following *directions* to all in general.

1. O! *agree with thine adversary while thou art yet in the way.* If God be your enemy, wo will be to you when you are in the midst of the storm, and have no friend's house nor chamber to go into.——O seek to have peace made up with God, by the mediation of your friend Jesus Christ, who is the friend of sinners.

2. See that thy *faith and repentance be evangelical.* In summer, a house with many holes and chinks may serve a man's turn to dwell in; but, in time of winter, men desire a house that is tenable, and will keep out the violence of the cold: so, in the days of peace, any sort of a faith serves the turn with many; but, in time of danger, distress, or affliction, *saving faith* will only stand in stead.

3. Endeavour to get *strength of judgment*, and *soundness in the faith of gospel-truths*, that in time of trial you may be able to give a reason of your faith; and that might be an antidote, if popery were coming in, against your kneeling to the mass. Poor ignorant creatures have no antidote against any error in the world.

4. Seek not only to have a *strong head*, but a *courageous heart*, to stand the trial. Your cause is good, if it be the truth; your master is great, if he be Christ. The captain hath gone before you.

5. Wean thyself from *all things in the world*, looking upon thy husband, thy child, thy goods and honour, as created things that must away; and set your eyes upon what is permanent: and be ready to express the love you think you have to Christ, and to express it even in the most perilous times.

6. Beware

6. Beware of the *ſins of the times*, and bewail them; and ſeek to be affected with all the diſhonours done God's name, both in former and preſent times; that, being purged from the ſins of the times, you may be preſerved from the judgments of the times. Live a life of dependence upon Jeſus: keep within your chambers: go not abroad to the world, leſt the ſtorm be upon you before you be houſed again.

2*dly*, We ſhall next lay down ſome *conſiderations*, drawn out of the text.

Conſid. 1. "That there are ſome, who, in a peculiar manner, are the *people of God*. My *People*, ſays "God here, in contradiſtinction from the *inhabitants* "*of the earth*, in the following verſe." And, indeed, when God is about to bring judgments upon the wicked, he would have his people out from amongſt them. They will not hearken to his voice; but come you, who are *my people*. But probably you may aſk, *Who are his peculiar people?* Why, his people are called *the ſheep of his paſture*. But, it may be ſtill enquired, *Who are the ſheep of his paſture?* They are deſcribed to be ſuch who know and follow him; *My ſheep hear my voice, and follow me*, ſays Chriſt, John x. 27. They are always bleating, ſo to ſpeak, after him, and crying to him, ſaying, *Lord, let me ſee thy face*. They are not content with any thing in the world till they get a ſight of him. They hear his voice, and regard it.—But when Chriſt ſpeaks to others; for example, to the *drunkard*, ſaying, Will you come to me, and quit your drunkenneſs? No; he will not hear on this ſide of the head. If he ſay to the *whoremonger*, Will you come to me, and quit your whoredom? No; he rejects the propoſal; he does not regard his voice; he goes on in his luſts. Such cannot be his ſheep, cannot ſurely be his people. But when Chriſt ſpeaks to his own ſheep, and requires them to quit their luſts, and come to him; their anſwer is, "Lord, I cannot get "it done; though it be long ſince I began to do it, "yet I think I am never the nearer my purpoſe than "I was many years ago; but, Lord, do it for me: "Lord, make me come to thee; and, O make me "quit all my luſts and idols." This argues they are

his people, and evidence they are his ſheep. They aim at obeying his voice, in his name and ſtrength: and the day comes wherein he will ſave them completely.

Conſid. 2. "That his people are a *ſafe* people: they "have the chambers that belong to them, for their "ſafety in days of trouble: *Come thou into thy cham-* "*bers.*" Beſides the protection of their God, his name and arms, where they are, as in a caſtle, ſafe and ſure indeed; for, *as the mountains are about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about his people:* they have inward peace, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience, which is a heartſome chamber, like a dry houſe in a rainy-day: *And the peace of God, that paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iv. 7.: even keep them as in a *garriſon*, as the original word ſignifies.

Conſid. 3. "That their ſafety from the ſtorm lies in "keeping *within their chambers*, and keeping their "chamber-doors *ſhut.*" Whenever they go out of their chambers, they are expoſed; for, in that caſe, when God ſtrikes the wicked, they ſhall not be ſpared any more than the reſt. They muſt not only enter into their chambers, but abide *within* doors; and not only ſo, but *ſhut* the doors, leſt the purſuer, the devil, come into them: they are to bar him out, as it were. This points out the neceſſity, not only of having faith, but of living by faith, and living a life of cloſs dependence upon a God in Chriſt.

Conſid. 4. "That the troubles and trials of the "church and children of God are but for a *ſhort time*, "but for *a moment;* yea, as it were, but *a little mo-* "*ment*, and the *indignation ſhall overpaſs:* the indig- "nation of man againſt them, and the indignation of "God; his fatherly anger, and the effects thereof: "and then you ſhall be ſet at liberty." The longeſt period of time here is but a moment, when compared with everlaſting life. And what the worſe will he be who hath ſuffered longer, than they who have ſuffered a ſhorter time? he that hath ſuffered ſeven years, than he that hath ſuffered ſeven days? Nay, the gold glances the finer, the longer it hath been in the fire.—— Therefore, this ſhould make you not at all to grudge

or

or repine. You are not to think that it is good for you to be quit of affliction; for then you would think yourself well, and would not desire another heaven; but he orders affliction, that you may long for the place where there is no more affliction. But they who get all their pleasure, let them not look for another heaven hereafter; for it will be told them, they have got their heaven here on earth; *Thou enjoyedst thy good things.* But happy they who bear afflictions dutifully! It is good reason you be used as your master was before you, yet your affliction will not last long: though you get many a stormy day, yet a fair one is coming, that will make you think little of all you suffered. When once you come to the upper chambers of God's house, it will be no grief of heart to you in heaven, that you suffered so long upon earth; it will appear but a moment when the indignation is overpast.

Consid. 5. "That the fear of the Lord's coming to "punish the earth, the world, for their iniquity, is a "*good motive* even to God's people to fly into their cham- "bers, and hide themselves. Do it, says the text; "*For, behold the Lord cometh out of his place.*" Because if they fly not out of the way, they may get a part of the shower and storm. When the Lord rained down the great hailstones upon the Egyptians, all that were out of their houses were destroyed; and they that left their beasts in the field went not thither to bring them off, all was destroyed: so, if you be out of your chambers, God will not spare you; therefore this should be a motive to fly. The fear of that hell that is coming upon the wicked, both in this life and the life to come, will be a motive to his people, who, though they be secured from hell, and ought not to have the slavish fear of that, yet are to fear that God *who can destroy both soul and body.*

Consid. 6. "That it is a *terrible thing* when God "comes out of his place to punish men: *Behold the* "*Lord cometh out of his place.*" It is observed by one, "That God's place is the mercy-seat; there he de- lights to sit and dwell between the cherubims, and there he is all mercy; but, when he comes out of his place, and, as it were, leaves the mercy-seat, and be-

takes himself to the judgment-seat, there he appears as an absolute God, a terrible God; there he takes no pleasure to be; *As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. But, when he is provoked thus to come out of his place, then he is all wrath, and nothing but a *consuming fire*." And, alas! what a terrible thing is it, to see God out of his place, punishing and destroying sinners, raining the first drops of hell upon them here, to presage the everlasting storm of wrath that is to blow upon them! Consider, O sinner, what case thou wilt be in, when *cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone!* It is a bottomless pit; and, when thou art cast into it, thou wilt constantly be falling down, and never find a bottom; and always the farther thou goest down, the more hot, and the more unable wilt thou be to endure it. And, as long as God lives, thou art to live in that case, who live and die out of Christ. Alas! *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* and to behold him coming out of his place!

Consid. 7. "That few, *very few*, will escape when "the Lord arises to punish; for, he is to punish the "*inhabitants of the earth*." Now, who are the inhabitants of the earth? and, who are there amongst us that are not the inhabitants of the earth? What, say you! are none to escape? To this we reply: A man is said to dwell where his heart dwells, and to be not where he is, but where he loves, and where his heart is. These are properly the inhabitants of the earth, whose hearts *inhabit* and *dwell fixedly* upon the earth; and so they only escape that have their hearts in heaven, their *conversation in heaven*, their burgessship in heaven, Philip. iii. 20; where these who have their conversation and burgessship in heaven, are set in opposition to these who *mind earthly things*, and *whose end is destruction*. They then who shall escape the punishment here threatened, are not burgesses in this world; their heart is not here below. But they who have their heart set upon earth, they will perish together with the perishing things their heart is set upon: they never desire to have their hearts elsewhere than upon the world; nor are they uneasy because they want heavenly

venly hearts. I suppose this may be a trying thing to most part here. Perhaps, when you send your heart once to heaven, you send it twenty times to the world: if you send your heart heavenward on the Sabbath-day, it may be you scarce do so till Sabbath come again: and therefore I mightily fear you be of the *inhabitants of the earth* here spoken of, that are to be punished. A child of God may have much of a worldly heart, but then it is a burden to him, and a sore trouble; a disease he seeks unto Jesus for healing of. However, those inhabitants of the earth here spoken of, are opposed to the people of God spoken of in the former verse; *Come, my people.*

Consid. 8. "That God hath *just cause to punish* when "he arises out of his place to do so. He comes to pu-"nish the inhabitants of the earth *for their iniquity.*" Wherefore is it? For their iniquity. He will not punish without just cause, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* He will declare their faults to them, and let them see it is for iniquity; that it is for their iniquity, their own wickedness; *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee,* Jer. ii. 19. Observe then, that God's judgments are just, and sinners shall be obliged to confess it; and none shall be able to say at the day of judgment, I have got wrong, I have got injustice: for that court is not like the courts among us, whether civil or ecclesiastic, from which some will come, saying, I have got a shameful wrong done me this day. But none shall have that to say here. As there is no appeal from God's court, so none shall have cause of complaint that injustice hath been done to them: nay, rather shall they have it to say, Ah! it was highly equitable, and a righteous sentence upon me; for how often have I been warned of this doleful day by the ministers of Christ, and told of all that is now come upon me; but I thought nothing of it, and delayed and shifted the grand concern! Their conscience shall condemn them; *Every mouth shall be stopped, and all the inhabitants of the world become guilty before God,* and be forced to subscribe to the equity of their doom, and the justice of the sentence. He punishes for their iniquity.

Consid. 9. "That *heaven* and *earth* will join together

"in

" in condemning the wicked and ungodly, when God " comes out of his place to punish them; *For the* " EARTH *shall disclose her blood, and shall no more co-* " *ver her slain.*" All the wrongs and bloody sins that have been committed on the earth, from age to age, shall be disclosed by the earth itself bearing witness to the wickedness done in it, as it is said, Joshua xxiv. 17. *Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us; it shall be a witness to you, lest ye deny your God.* So it may be said, the earth hath seen and heard all the wickedness done upon it: and by the recognition of conscience it shall witness and testify against the sinner. As the *Lord*, the omniscient God, will reveal the whole matter, even the faults that men thought were quite out of mind, their twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years old wickedness laid as fair and fresh before them as it was the hour wherein it was committed; so the *earth* shall bear witness and disclose all the sins that seemed to be buried in it; for, with the resurrection of the bodies of the wicked, there will be a resurrection of sins. In a manner, the earth will vomit up what it swallowed down, and behoved to bear so long in its breast. God will tell you the place where you committed your whoredom. The wall and timber of the house will bear witness against you. Take heed, *drunkard*, the day will come when God will make the table you sit at stand up, as it were, in your view, and bear witness against you. Take heed *adulterer*, God will make the bed to rise and witness against you. None but they that have a good Advocate and a good conscience shall escape. The earth will disclose the blood that hath been shed in Scotland; the bloody shambles will rise and witness against the persecutors. *The earth shall no more cover her slain*, when *the Lord comes out of his place.*

Consid. 10. " That the time of the Lord's coming " to judgment is not here *specified;* not only to shew " that we know not how near hand the avenging stroak " is, but also to shew that the Lord is not yet away " out of his place; he is not yet risen up in his wrath, " but as yet upon his mercy-seat." His judgments may be very near indeed; for much barrenness is amongst

mongſt us; and he ſays, *Behold, the ax is laid to the root of the tree.* And there are few watery eyes for ſin among us; few ſighers and mourners, that have the mark of preſervation when the deſtroying angel comes about.

But as yet the chamber-doors of mercy are open, and the Lord is ſaying, Come, come; *enter into your chambers:* therefore, *To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts as in the provocation.* O Sirs, come to Jeſus for ſafety.

(1.) You who are *without*, and have never come in to theſe chambers, let me tell you, that yet a little while, and the calamity here threatened will be upon you: ſickneſs or ſorrow may be upon you in a little; yea, death and judgment will be upon you in a little. Sword, famine, and peſtilence may be haſting upon the land: many ſpiritual and temporal judgments are already ſurrounding us; and, if by theſe we will not be reformed, we may expect that God will puniſh us *ſeven times more*, and *yet ſeven times more for our iniquities.* And ſince Reformation amongſt the generality is going back, inſtead of going forward, either in church or ſtate; days of dreadful calamity, and ſtorms, wrath and indignation are haſtening on. O then, why ſtay you without doors, where it is impoſſible you can eſcape the indignation of God, and the damnation of hell? O fly, fly for refuge, to *lay hold on the hope ſet before you.* Chriſt is the city of refuge, the chamber of ſafety, and all the doors of the chamber are yet open to you; *Whoſoever will, let him come.* Chriſt, as a *Prophet*, is an open door of hope for ignorant ſinners; O come in here, and be taught. Chriſt as a *Prieſt*, is an open door of hope for guilty ſinners; O come in here, and get remiſſion of ſin in his blood. Chriſt, as a *King*, is an open door of hope to captive ſinners, under the power and ſlavery of ſin and Satan; O let ſuch come in here, and ſhare of the victory of Chriſt, who came in the fleſh *to deſtroy the works of the devil*, and who comes in the Spirit by a preached goſpel for the ſame end. O come into him by faith and believing in him: and, if you cannot come, pray, pray that he may draw you in; for he ſtands ready to take you by the hand: he ſays not, Go in without me; but, come in and take my help.

(2.) You who are *within*, and who have entered into these chambers, let me tell you for your comfort, that as you are in a place of safety, where you do well to stay and abide by faith; so yet a little while, and the indignation will be overpast, and all calamity will be over your head; yet a little while, and death itself will be a door of hope to you, so as you may sing there, and say, Farewel death, and welcome life: *Death shall be swallowed up in victory*. Farewel faith and hope, and welcome vision and fruition. Farewel fighting and war, and welcome victory, victory for evermore. Farewel sin and sickness, and welcome perfect holiness and perfect health; for, *the inhabitant* of that land *shall not say, I am sick*. Farewel vain world and ill neighbours, and welcome the innumerable company of angels. Farewel trouble, and welcome rest, the *rest that remains for the people of God*. Farewel sighing and sobbing, and welcome the *song of Moses and of the Lamb*, everlasting praises and hallelujahs. Farewel jars and contentions, and welcome peace, pleasure, and love. Farewel church militant, and false brethren, welcome church triumphant, the *general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven*. Farewel sweet promises, and welcome full and glorious performance; *Not one good thing hath failed of all that he promised*. Farewel partial enjoyments, scanty, fleeting, and little tastes; welcome full meal, and the table that shall never be drawn. Farewel wants, and welcome fulness. Farewel darkness and doubts, and fears, and dangers; and welcome light, assurance, eternity, security, and everlasting embraces of my glorious Lord. Farewel base lusts and corruptions, you and I have kept too long company together, and, blessed be God, we will never meet again; but welcome grace in perfection, which is everlasting glory. Yet a little while, and you may sing these sweet notes upon the banks of the Jordan of death; for he that says, *Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you*, &c. says also, *In a little moment the indignation shall be overpast*, and all clouds and storms shall evanish.

The END *of* VOLUME SIXTH.